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Angela M. Davenport
Seton Hall University

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**HOME SCHOOLING: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE
AND CLIMATE IN SELECTED SETTINGS**

BY

ANGELA M. DAVENPORT

Dissertation Committee

**Anthony J. Colella, Ph.D., Mentor
Reverend Christopher J. Hynes, D. Min.
Robert J. Connelly, Ed.D.
Tyler Hess, Ed.D.**

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Is the paradigm of schooling shifting? Schooling has been historically regarded as a reflection of community values and their needs regarding the education of their children. Consequently, school effectiveness and criticism is closely aligned to these values. Historically, debate also has a consistent role in education. Recent debate regarding schooling and education is fueled by sensitive issues surrounding equity, equality, and effectiveness (Firestone, 1997). These issues continue to gather much public awareness as the debate about school effectiveness prevails and traditional schools are involved in an array of "reform" movements. Since schooling and education are inherent in the values and beliefs in a democracy and indeed these values are communicated in traditional schools, controversy regarding school effectiveness is not a recent occurrence (Giroux, 1991).

Since the 1980's, the quest for excellence and accountability of school efforts has been a prominent mission of major political policymakers. This search for higher educational quality and performance was initiated by a perceived national crisis – apprehension that the United States would not be prepared to meet technological demands of a nation whose future is dependent upon maintaining the competitive edge (Firestone, 1997). After two decades of data collection and analysis, the policy paper entitled "Nation at Risk" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1989) was

published, defining what schools should be accomplishing while setting the framework for standardization in the format of national goals. In response to the repercussions of this report, substantial data has been generated resulting in prolific debate. Consequently, educational practices and policy implementation are now being scrutinized more closely while mandates for education change increase in number. Since policymakers have usurped the responsibility for educational change by initiating policy in the format of standards, strategic plans for school restructuring abound. Organizational difficulties trigger a wide response of reform efforts, but it seems that an underlying movement may be affecting the future of traditional schooling in the form of choice.

As parents become more informed concerning educational choices, one of the most controversial issues has been over the constitutional right for parents to choose the educational environment for their children. Debate has ensued while public support for parental choice has increased, making it stronger than ever. As policy makers and managers continue their intricate dance of school improvement, American culture has responded by adapting the long-standing right to home school into a viable option. Until the arrival of public education, home instruction was the mainstay of frontier American education. It was, and still is, a protected right under the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution. Gradually, however, public models began to provide a satisfactory alternative and proliferated during the industrial age. As public education flourished due to increased accessibility and confidence, schooling at home diminished in usage (Haag, 1994).

Today, however, one of the fastest growing choice options is home education or "home schooling" (Lyman, 1998). A recent renaissance and rise in the practice of home

schooling may be an indication of an increasingly preferred choice in schooling options. Perhaps the growing perception of an undertow of failure in public schools coupled with recent concern over school safety has bolstered renewed interest (Shaiberg, 1999). Indeed, the National Home School Research Institute asserts that inquiries about the practice of home schooling have nearly doubled since the tragic school incident in Columbine (NHERI, 1999).

Since the body of empirical evidence is scanty on home schooling, the factors contributing to this momentum are unavailable. One could speculate that the trends in the rapid exchange of data and the substantial increase of its availability have been able to remove barriers that existed several years ago. Parents' knowledge base regarding both awareness and implementation of home schooling may have afforded more opportunity for home schooling.

Current data regarding numbers involved in the home schooling movement has generally been self-reported and its accuracy is difficult to ascertain. Accurate number estimates are difficult to obtain since they are derived from surveys and anecdotal information (Lines, 1999). According to statistics from the Department of Education, approximately 500,000 to 750,000 children are taught at home (NCPA, 1997); however, the Home School Legal Defense Association (1999) refutes these numbers, claiming that 1.2 million children are educated at home. Accuracy in reporting these numbers is essential for policy development. For example, in New Jersey, only one thousand students were home educated according the 1986 census, and recent data is scanty and kept by individual school districts and counties (Lines, 1999).

Although home schooling may be characterized by some as a less popular educational activity, reports indicate that it is a successful practice (Russo, 1999). The perception that home schooling is successful was also advanced by a policy analysis done by the Cato Institute (National Center for Policy Analysis, 1999). However, this position is refuted by many home school opponents. The National Education Association (1998), as well as many local educator associations, focus upon the lack of teacher accreditation, poor educational requirements, and little accountability in home schooling. Claims asserting poor socialization in home schooled children have accompanied skeptics, as well as accusations of parents utilizing home schooling to isolate children from diversity. Critics of home schooling point to minimally trained parent teachers as well as poor monitoring of educational practices. Since this controversy directly relates to the efficacy of the practice, information regarding the curriculum and practice is essential to assess this perception (Aix, 1994).

A study conducted by Lines (1986) indicated that home schooling successes outweigh failures regarding both academic and social development. These findings were corroborated by L. F. Rudner. Rudner's (1999) study claims higher academic achievement within each grade and skill level, identifying performance scores between the 70th and 80th percentile of students nationwide when compared with traditionally schooled counterparts. These results may mean that home based instructional approaches are more effective than those used in conventional schools. Although the studies conducted by Lines (1986) and Rudner (1999) compare achievement scores, neither study identifies the methodological approaches utilized in home schooling. Thus, while these results are intriguing, they do little to examine particular home schooling practices.

Consequently, these studies call for the increased need for investigations into home schooling practices.

Little research information was available about the actual instructional practice or the instructional approaches used in home schooling. In this era of increasing demands for student and teacher accountability, it is important to understand the educational practices associated with this choice.

Statement of the Problem

From 1986 to today, the digest of home school research has been concentrated in areas that provide an overview of the practice from several perspectives. Researchers such as Shepard (1986), Gustafson (1988), and Resetar (1990) have identified reasons and motivations for selection of home education. Other areas of study include perceptions of various stakeholders, beliefs and attitudes of home school instructors (Ray, 1989a), social adjustment of home schooled students (Kelley, 1991; Shyers, 1992; Tillman, 1995), and assessment practices and outcomes (Galloway & Sutton, 1995; Rudner, 1999). Though these studies describe the reasons for home schooling and the settings, studies regarding the decisions surrounding curriculum choice, educational instructional practices, and climate were not available. As indicated by the Home School Legal Defense Association (1999), parents select a wide array of curriculum and deliver the instructional content in personalized ways. Data describing the fundamental approaches or instructional materials for home education is limited. Although literature offered by the National Home Education Research Institute made references to the curriculum, there is no description of the instructional approaches and climate, nor is

there a description of the implementation of the curriculum (Ray, 1989a). Curriculum and teaching methods are a determinant to effective instruction and successful outcomes. In fact, significant criticism surround the claims of public school failure to equip students with the skills needed for future workplace experience (Stone, 1999). The assertion that insufficient curriculum coupled with low expectations have been the primary cause of poor performance in public schooling (Riley, 1993).

The complexity of curriculum was illustrated well by Sergiovanni (1997) as he distinguished the "ideal, real, and practical curricula" (p. 120). In support of the importance of educational practice, Sergiovanni stated the following:

Subject matter content and concepts are at the very heart of curriculum and are the armature on which others concerns are built. Still, subject matter is more than something to teach. It is something to teach with as well [italics added]. Further relationships between subject matter to be learned and how this subject is taught are important ones. It is an accepted principle in educational theory that processes and means affect each other -- they cannot be separated. (p. 120)

In light of current disagreement regarding standards for education, home schooling opponents point to the lack of teacher training and regulation of standards based education. This study was important because it attempted to describe the home schooling practice from a perspective grounded in the foundation of effective schooling. This was accomplished by deriving the interview questions from the consensus of effective schools research. Effective schools research substantiates sound instructional methods and has identified optimal environments for learning. This study attempts to

describe the instructional practices and the climate in which the instruction takes place. It is hoped by forwarding the findings of this research that a heightened understanding of home schooling with its theoretical and practical underpinnings will be available. Clearly, more information was needed about what was taught, how educational decisions were made, and how the educational climate influences learning.

Purpose of the Study

Given the increase in the popular use of home schooling, this phenomenological study attempted to understand the insider's perspective, emergent themes, patterns of instructional approaches, in addition to attempting to provide a description of the atmosphere in which these occur. Creswell (1998) suggests that a phenomenological study "provides a foundation to identify the phenomena and describe whether or not a central or unifying theme exists" (p. 120). The purpose of this study was to describe the actual educational methods and instructional constructs that form the basis of instruction, while ascertaining the educational climate in the environment. As Sergiovanni (1987) states:

Climate not only indicates the quality of life in a school but also influences that school's capacity to change; the work habits and operating styles of principals, teachers, and students; and ultimately, the quality of teaching and learning. (p. 136)

Teaching practice and the manner in which it is implemented is crucial to the learning environment. Research regarding effective practices in education can be separated into

four broad categories: Curriculum, Teaching Decisions, Teaching Methods, and Teaching Environment.

Leedy (1997) stated that a qualitative researcher's task is to regard that task as an exploration of the social setting construct and to explain it according to its participants. The purpose of this study was to gain insight from those actively participating in home schooling regarding current patterns, themes of instruction, and how instruction is accomplished. By providing a description of the organizational structure, instructional practice, and climate, this study increased the body of research about these components and how closely they may have replicated effective school practice.

Importance of the Study

Despite current attention and increased selection of home schooling by parents, there is a significant void of research. For example in New Jersey, a gross estimate focused primarily on the number of participants. The significant lack of home schooling data in New Jersey from 1989 through 1999 is reflected by the inability to find accurate sources by which to identify home school students (Lines, 1999). Although count data is important, it does little to describe or develop an awareness of what was implemented. This is especially significant given recent findings which indicate academic achievement in home schooled children to be higher than their traditionally schooled counterparts (Richman, Girtten, & Snyder, 1992; Rudner, 1999).

A structural description of home schooling instructional practices may provide some insights about the experience and its effects upon achievement. Thus, the importance of this study was to describe the theoretical underpinnings and actual

instructional practice of home schooling in selected settings in New Jersey. As more information about the perceived success of home schooling becomes available, policy makers may want more precise knowledge about the home schooling practice and its implementation. This study attempted to provide a more detailed description of this educational practice and climate in New Jersey, from the frames of effective school categories of curriculum, teaching decisions, methods, and environment.

It was important to study this process since the debate over home instruction continues and has now expanded into political arenas. The 2000 Presidential Campaign spurred an article by the Democratic Party (National Democratic Organization, 2000) suggesting that George W. Bush's position on home schooling is lenient, which may suggest that the Democratic Party platform is for more stringent control. The article alludes to weakening standards and accusations that it is a cover for truant students and removal of students to elitist enclaves. Since home schooling is now identified as a campaign issue under the guise of social issues, political lobbying efforts have increased on both sides of the issue.

Since political pressure oftentimes dictates educational policy through successful lobbying efforts, lobbying efforts are closely scrutinized. There has been keen interest in the increased lobbying efforts by the Home School Association since they may have impact upon resources that are traditionally allocated to public schools. In an organized effort, the Home School Legal Defense Association (1999) provides legislative updates as a regular service to their members. Congressional lobbying by these groups may have continued impact upon educational legislation. According to the Home School Legal Defense Association (1999), efforts to modify legislation have been successful, asserting

that their lobbying campaign led to the modification of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and teacher certification requirements. The National Education Association (1999) countered these intense efforts to neutralize any financial impact. Therefore, based upon the apparent disparity in opinion about influence, this study was important to obtain better insight from the participants about this experience because it may have impact upon funding formulas for traditional schools.

Guiding Questions

The guiding questions for this research were developed from the void in the literature relating to home schooling which were essential to effective schooling. The larger research question surrounds the conceptualization and sense of culture of home schooling. However, deepening attention and discussion foster the need for more data about curriculum and choices regarding the content and implementation, as well as how this is meted out.

Given recent home school studies of indicated higher achievement, this study attempted to identify and describe the essential teaching and learning experience as described by home school instructors. A growing body of research, known as effective school practices, is keenly watched by educators since school improvement efforts require a sound foundation. The areas of focus of the study are curriculum, teaching methods, teaching decisions, and environment.

It has been stated that school improvements have been an unending succession of externally imposed chaotic restructuring efforts (Fullan, 1997). Therefore, it has been essential to determine what was the prevailing condition of instruction and climate

affecting schooling activities. This applies to home schooling as well because the National Home School Research Institute indicated that a majority of home schooled students are exposed to a formal curriculum (Ray, 1997). In none of the literature does a description of the type of curriculum used exist. Also, little data can be found relating to the condition of the educational setting in terms of organizational structure and climate. These factors may have influenced the results of studies by Ray (1997) and Rudner (1999) on achievement. Since achievement claims have been touted as an important benefit of home schooling, this study was important because it attempted to provide a thematic pattern to home schooling instructional practices. Therefore, the research guiding questions center on curricular planning and learning goals.

Effective teaching and learning is maximized by the use of a well-planned and executed curriculum (Sergiovanni, 1987). Therefore, it is important to determine how the home school curriculum is chosen and implemented. Managing instruction and organization of the school day is vital to the integration of the curriculum. Educational decisions regarding scope and sequence, time utilization, and organizational routines are key to learning (Anderson, 1980, 1981). Questions pertaining to these areas will illustrate instructional organization practice.

Motivational locus of control and self-responsibility have been highlighted by research as characteristics that build in natural success to teaching methods (Autry, 1985). Behavioral expectations, incentives, and rewards were questioned in this research study to identify these factors in home school environment. This area of inquiry also related to the approach of the climate and environment in the home school.

Questions regarding management and organization of the learning environment were analyzed because of the impact these have on instruction (Brophy, 1986). Student-teacher interactions were identified and probed due to their importance to the pupil/teacher relationship (Berryman, 1991). Assessment and monitoring of goals and expectations for student maintains fluid instruction and feedback is an essential factor in determining acquisition of learning (Kulik & Kulik, 1987; Gottfried & Gottfried, 1991).

Since the utilization of technology has been touted as an effective instructional strategy (Bracey, 1996; Kulik, 1983), interview questions were used to identify how this educational tool is employed in this environment. In order to determine the amount of technical assistance that home instructors used, questioning their resources and their origin was important. A complete set of guided questions was formulated from the research identified previously (see Appendix A).

Data collected about these questions attempted to provide a socially constructed description of the actual instructional application of schooling in the home. The questions were divided into four main categories including curricular choices, teaching choices, methods implemented, and teaching environment. The use of categories to devise the research question not only anchors the data to empirical data but also constructs a framework for analysis. In essence, by identifying each of the effective school sub-domains, it allows for a structure to be established by which one can analyze the practice.

Scope and Limitations

This study was limited to selected home schooling settings in Hunterdon, Burlington, Middlesex, Ocean, and Cape May counties in New Jersey. Since it is difficult to determine the actual count of home schooled students, this study will not address the actual known numbers of students, nor will it attempt to gather this information. The sample was drawn from snowball referral, and although it may cover the state, groups being present from a specific geographic area may not occur.

The study will not focus upon analysis of the methods or instructional practices to determine efficacy of those practices, nor did it make comparisons to other educational models. Although extraneous data regarding other than instructional information may arise during in-depth interviews, this data will not be relevant to the focus of the study.

The interview process was limited to eighteen open-ended questions issued to eight randomly selected home schooling parents in selected counties. These participants were selected from networks and may not represent a wide scope of home school practice.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were pertinent to this study:

- 1) Home Schooling: The education of school aged children under parental general monitoring, replacing full time attendance at a traditional campus school. It is also "the formal instruction of children in their homes instead of in school" (Encyclopedia of American Education, 1996, p. 247).
- 2) Instruction: Teaching methods and strategies used to transfer and monitor knowledge.

- 3) **Curriculum:** A set of standards of educational outcomes that include a scope and sequence of what and when it is to be learned.
- 4) **Instructional Methodology:** Formats for the delivery of information. These are Inquiry, Lecture, Demonstration, and Experimentation.
- 5) **Climate:** The environment and attitudes surrounding instructional methodology.
- 6) **Unschooling:** Term coined by John Dewey (1944) which depicts a philosophical approach to learning that focuses upon individuation in learning. This fosters the development of the person whereby the results will strengthen the democracy in an associated mode of living. Encompassed within this conceptual frame is the belief that curriculum is individual to the learner which decides the path, not a set criteria of objectives to be "learned" by all.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

Home schooling has been increasingly perceived as a viable alternative to conventional schooling. The preponderance of literature demonstrates the perceptions, socialization, criticisms, and legal challenges. However, minimal literature exists regarding demonstrated teaching methods. This literature review sets the stage for interest in home schooling.

Public School Controversy

As with any bureaucracy, the public school movement has been criticized since its early days of organization. Legislators, policy makers, and the public obtain data from many sources which support the current political platforms and initiatives. Information about educational issues presented in a variety of formats is commonplace. Public critique molds the movement. Many sources, who perceive the state of affairs of traditional education differently, scrutinize schools and propose a myriad of restructuring and reform strategies. Public schooling in the 80's and 90's had been poised politically for change by assertions of poor efforts, little standardization, poor achievement, and weak expectations which are among the identified traits of poor schools.

Philosophies and arguments about the status of conventional schools and this perceived failure have proliferated over the past decade. One such argument is the

premise for Why Public Schools Fail? by J. L. Payne. In this work, Payne (1989) claims that private schools have a better success rate due to minimal invasive micro-management activities, and thus, are subsequently more flexible. According to Payne, the market value of private schooling where consumers are free to choose, builds into the system a mechanism for quality. In addition, he suggests that the basic security issues of teachers are better satisfied in the private domain by an increase in student performance.

While public attitudes may not be favorable, public school employees believe that their school system is effective. The Fifth Phi Delta Kappa Poll (Langdon, 1999) reported that teachers held more favorable views of public education than the public with the exception of inner city teachers. Surveyed teachers believe that student achievement is high. Nonetheless, concern about achievement is a major concern of many critics. A national move to standardization and data collection substantiating school performance had prompted furious conflict between advocates and critics. Use of this data includes rationalization of claims made about a manufactured crisis in the United States.

Indicators of poor performance have been analyzed and critiqued as well. Some believe that right-wing influences have largely created this dilemma (Stedman, 1989). Stedman's article documents data that shows a large body of research identifying America's achievement weakness over the last decade. Student achievement remains below standards according to the latest round of NAEP studies, whose proficiency levels are set by an independent policy making body, namely the National Assessment Governing Board. This board develops its criteria from participation of various stakeholders.

Critics say unrealistic standards are arbitrary and that student achievement is still suspect. A recent article in the Washington Times critiqued President Clinton's education plan by stating that the gradual erosion of local and federal control is attached to various funding programs (Farris, 1999). During the Bush administration economic influence became a paramount in policy setting for educators. Economic indicators powerfully influence government's role in education, which in turn, sparks much controversy among the educational community and its critics. The belief that economics should have lesser influence was clearly outlined in the "Eight Bracey Report on the Condition of Public Education" (Bracey, 1998). In this work, Bracey suggests that a review of current evidence and indicators should also include challenges to their reliability. According to Bracey, money expenditure for education has not grown substantially enough to support solid achievement. As he explains, since achievement is closely aligned to expenditure per pupil, Bracey believes that higher funding will result in increased achievement. Bracey also identifies the void in research about vouchers, charter schools, choice, or privatization.

Criticism often leads to political pressure, and as this increases, so does crisis. The manner in which crisis affects policy making in America is addressed by G. J. Cisek (1999) in his article "Give Us this Day Our Daily Dread: Manufacturing Crises in Education." In this work, Cisek examines the use of the term "crisis" in education. Believing that the term is over-used, he searched a database for similar keywords and produced a list of 4,027 documents dealing with the term "crisis." This main focus of this article was the reaction to the publication of Nation of Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1989) which Cisek asserts was a "manufactured crisis." The

data presented in this brochure is commonly thought to have provided the motivation for government to become more actively involved in educational policy setting (National Commission on Excellence, 1983).

Authors Berliner and Biddle (1996) claim that throughout most of the Reagan and Bush years there was an unprecedented and energetic attack on American public schools. They accuse these Republican administrations of making false claims about the supposed failure of schools. Claiming that evidence does not back information in Nation at Risk, Berliner and Biddle infer the purpose of this brochure is to undermine Americans' confidence in the public school system. Focusing upon this supposed misinformation has initiated "poor policy decisions" that have had a negative impact on educators and students (p. 36).

Educational Alternatives

Because of the controversy over school effectiveness, creating alternatives to the traditional setting have proliferated. A premise for disestablishing school was based upon a mutual definition of man's nature and the nature of modern institutions that is categorized in our worldview and language (Ilich, 1971). In his discussion, Ilich chooses the school as his paradigm and deals directly with the bureaucratic design of schooling. In this discourse, Ilich discusses the disparity of funds appropriated for education and per capita cost of schooling. Obligatory schooling according to Ilich inevitably polarizes society, and causes great nations of the world to adhere to an international caste system. This caste system poses a distinct problem that may have considerable bearing upon motivation in students.

Noble prizewinners have also criticized the organizational structure of schooling.

In his autobiographical notes, Einstein (1951) states:

It is in fact, nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of freedom; without this it goes to wreck and ruin without fail it is a very great mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be promoted by means of co-urgent and a sense of duty. To the contrary, I believe it would be possible to rob even a healthy beast of prey of its voraciousness, if it were possible, with the aid of a whip, to force the beast to devour continuously, even when not hungry, especially if the food, handed out under such coercion, were to be selected accordingly. (as cited in Schilipp, 1951, p. 17)

As with crisis, there is also no shortage of educational reformers. John Holt theorizes that the organizational structure of school has a negative and almost brutal effect on students. His letters contain critiques of the public school system offering that the abuse of power relegates the educational system to a prison (1997, as cited in Sheffer, 1992). Holt's last years were dedicated to the option of home schooling (1997a, b). This alternative he suggests is a better option for avoiding what he considered the dangers of the system. In one of his books, Holt (1997b) not only explores why parents move their children from school to teach them at home, but he also provides a sequential guide for parents who choose to home school.

Holt's (1997 a, b) perspective shared similarities of philosophers such as Rousseau who believed in the personal freedom of man. In fact, current critics of public school use the premise of freedom, stating that organizations can undermine the personal belief systems of man (Bundy, 1998). This has led many parents, who do not agree with the value set of public school, to choose to educate their children in the home setting. According to researcher Jerome Kagan (1998), parental influence is peerless, which helps parents to provide a powerful role model. A big reason for this is that children can assume that special qualities seen in parents can also belong to them. Home schooling as an alternative to public schools is gaining popularity and usage. A working paper identifies estimates of the home schooling population for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Survey responses are the basis for the data collection. The data shows that the number of home schooled children increases considerably each year (Lines, 1999). According to Lines (1991), between 248,500 and 353,500 students were home educated during the 1990-1991 school year. Information from the Home School Legal Defense Association (1999) suggests that this population has increased from 15,000 to close to a total of one million in 1994.

Researcher P. K. Aiey (1994) argues that this increase is forcing public educators to take notice of the movement. This study focuses on socialization and creativity in the home school setting. Interviews with home school participants detail their reasons for selection of this option. The issues that hasten parent decision to home school or privatizing their education was focused on by researcher Maralee Mayberry (1991). In her study, rationales given for home schooling included lack of parental influence on the educational system and philosophical opposition to its ideological content. Findings

conclude that home school parents, especially those belonging to organized religion, had little confidence in public education.

According to researcher B. A. Bliss (1989), current trends toward privatizing education needs examination within the wider context of crisis manifested at ideological levels of the state. Bliss relates that home schooling is a result of a government struggle to balance contradictory initiatives as shown in the historical development of parent's confrontation with schools and the court system, as well as the cooperative efforts between conventional and home schools (Knowles, 1988 as cited in Bliss, 1989).

In a study conducted by P. Long (1998), demographic characteristics and attitudes toward education of students in home school were explored. This research suggests that while the home schooling movement can be described using sociological criteria, the theoretical constructs must be drawn upon for public policy.

One document suggests that home schooling is not desirable because it undermines the Christian influence in public schools (Menendez, 1996). Another negative claim is poor socialization skills (Aix, 1994). Socialization skills is a topic studied widely, since the capacity of the home setting to provide a satisfactory socialization experience has always been in question. Stough (1992) compares the social emotional status of home schooled children with conventionally schooled children in West Virginia. Results show no statistical difference between the populations for social sufficiency, self-concept, or the presence of emotional indicators as adversarial effects. Stough's study refutes the preconceived notions on socialization of home schooled children in West Virginia.

While studies have been done on socialization skills of home schooled children, there is a lack of information about home schooled children's social network. One study conducted by A. D. Chatham-Carpenter (1992) found that overall home schooled children are not at risk in terms of isolation, but they are at risk for feeling less close towards peers and are less likely to be open to receiving supports from their peer friend relationships, in comparison to public schoolers.

Another factor examined in the research is the impact upon the structure and functioning of the family unit. In a study conducted by McDowell (1998), both qualitative and quantitative methodologies examined the effect on the family when the decision is made to home school. The objective of the study was twofold. The initial objective was to study the perception of the mother-teacher in home schooling families, which may increase stress and be a major influence on the impact of the mother's role within the family dynamics. A secondary research objective was to focus on the stresses a family might experience because of the decision to home school. Findings of the study suggest that home schooling has a positive impact upon both the school and the family overall. One finding, in particular, suggests that home schooling acts as a stress-reducing educational alternative whereby empowering the mother/teacher strengthens the family unit. This response did not vary statistically throughout the sample. Interesting to note is that mother/teachers who were forced into selecting home schooling perceive the process in a more negative way, than those who opted for home schooling without coercion.

According to author E. H. Humphrey (1998), home schooling has been an alternative for many parents dissatisfied with traditional education for various reasons included academics, safety, and religion. Parents who select home schooling like the

flexibility of providing academics in a less controlled environment. Variations to individual learning differences and a wide array of learning environments are strong components. Individual student's interests are considered more in the home school option. Humphrey's report illustrates that a great deal of emphasis was placed on the religious aspect especially Christianity. Humphrey's point has been supported by major studies (Aron, 1981; Farris, 1999; Holt, 1997a, b) in which a major reason for choosing the home schooling option was because public schools have executed religious values from the daily curriculum. A more recent reason for choosing home schooling has been the issue of safety. This issue is a direct result of traumatic events in traditional schools (NHERI, 1999).

A study conducted by Rudner (1999) purported that higher achievement was a common characteristic of home schooled students. This study found that home schooled students scored exceptionally high on achievement tests, with scores typically in the 70th to 80th percentile. Several other major findings came out of this study. Firstly, the author found that the median income for home school families is higher than all other types of families with children in the United States. Secondly, parents of home school students are typically married couples, who possess more formal education than parents in the general population. Finally, Rudner's study also concludes that home school students spend less time watching television as compared with the general population of school aged students.

In Rudner's study (1999), religious dogma is the primary focus of the sample population since education is founded upon moral and religious values felt to be absent from public education. Home schools also place greater value and emphasis on study

skills, working independently, and the love of learning. According to this study, this last influence needs to be researched more thoroughly.

Analysis of test scores of home scholars certifies higher achievement levels in this population (Tipton, 1990). In an analysis of the results for third, sixth, and ninth grade students on an achievement test, home schooled children performed higher than their public school counterparts.

In an attempt to evaluate performance outcomes of students electing home criteria for admissions, Jenkins (1998) determined that home school students outperformed the non-home schooled students despite full or part-time status. Despite this, only 27 percent of the admission officers expect home schooled students to be more successful than non-home schooled students from accredited high schools. This explains the negative perception of the school officials toward the efficacy of this alternative. This study also suggests that less than 50 percent of the institutions have official policies for admission, yet 87 percent of these institutions accept home schooled students.

A study conducted by Galloway and Sutton (1995) investigated the potential for success of home schooled students using student aptitude evaluations as a form of measurement. This study included 190 first time freshman from not only home school settings, but also public and private schools. Results cite the only significant difference as being notable were the high scores of home school graduates on the ACT English sub-test.

In a study conducted by Webb (1989), performance issues in adults who were partially or wholly home educated were examined. This study finds that all were successful in their attempt at higher education and that there was no evidence of prejudice

regarding employment. In addition, Webb found that the socialization of home-educated students was often better than that of their traditionally schooled peers.

In a study examining the post secondary options of home schooled children, Jenkins (1998) examined the admissions of home school graduates to community college. This dissertation study denotes that there is an increasing number of students who select the home schooling option throughout high school, but are currently seeking admission to post-secondary traditional models.

The historical perspective on home schooling in the United States, as well as the growth, development, and future challenges to the home schooling model are discussed extensively by Margaret Martin. In her book, Home Schooling: Parents' Reaction, Martin (1997) reviews home schooling as an alternative to public school education. Discussing the popular reasons for this choice, Martin illustrates that the home school parents participating in the survey had been home schooling for more than five years. All of the parents studied had college educations. Reasons for home schooling include religion, more individualization, and the ability to monitor more closely children's learning and personal relationships. All parents in this survey found home schooling to be an immense amount of work, but overall their attitudes were positive. They describe local support groups as a tremendous asset.

Initial attempts to describe and understand the home school phenomena were explored in a paper presented by L. Williams (1991) at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Major parental concerns cited by the author were the following: fear, self-doubt, isolation, exhaustion, separating home and

school, balance between structure and spontaneity, undesirable child behavior, lack of materials, and insufficient funds.

In a study conducted by Mahan and Joyce (1997), the authors explored the reason for determining why parents choose to educate their children at home and the attitudes surrounding this issue. The authors utilized checklists and an attitude survey to examine both parents' and school officials' reaction to the current literature on home schooling, with a particular focus on accuracy. While parents agree with the benefits of home schooling reported in the literature, superintendents disagree with the literature on all but two points. This discrepancy is a demonstration of the conflicting attitudes between superintendents and parents. It should be noted that a large number of superintendents exhibited animosity toward home schooling in unsolicited, negative written comments appended to the survey.

In a doctoral dissertation, Gladin (1987) identified the characteristics of home schooling. An analysis of the findings included the following conclusions: the typical home school parents are college trained young adult professionals, who live in the suburbs; the typical home school parents have three children; the parents monitor the television viewing of their children closely; the home school has operated less than three years with the mother as the teacher; most of the home school students have either attended public and Christian school, and are enthusiastic about their home school; peer pressure and religious conviction initiated home schooling; and parents are satisfied with their home school and are not bothered by civil authorities.

As an advocate of the movement, Ray (1989a) describes in his paper the history of home schooling. According to Ray, motivation for this alternative practice is the

family's desire to teach Christian values to their children. Domains that affect home education in the future include future research on home schooling; the consequences of the responses to home schooling by public and private school advocates; and what support can be provided to parents to optimize oversight of home schooling.

A detailed account of home schooling, providing a vision of home education that reflects its multidimensional nature is discussed by Mayberry, Knowles, Ray, and Marlow (1995). Since home schooling is increasing, they provide facts about home education to educators. Increasingly, these facts have aided in the passing of legislation which allows student access to academic, elective, and extracurricular activities of public schools (Pearson, 1996).

A review of recent literature on home schooling in the United States conducted by Maralee Mayberry (1991) finds that parents who home school their children tend to have two or three more years of formal education than the general population, and may have more children. Again, ideological differences are the main reasons presented for home schooling. General curricula is usually a wide range of conventional subjects, which emphasizes reading, mathematics, and science. Findings connote the relationships between home school families, public school administrators, and government officials are changing to an air of cooperation. This review also showed that the existing studies on home schooling have serious methodological problems.

A review of the most recent research says that home schooled children perform at higher academic levels than non-home schooled children as indicated in several studies (Ray, 1997; Rudner, 1999).

Giving up public education for the sake of security, morale, and educational quality were cited as the main reasons for choosing home schooling in a study conducted by Nelson (1986). This study denotes that home schooling offers the advantages of closeness and security; however, antagonists to home schooling point to poor opportunity for socialization and the inability of parents to cover all academic areas. Nelson's article suggests that administrators who oppose this option fear a decrease in state aid because of a drop in enrollment. It also refers to prosecution of home school families and advises districts and home school families to cooperate.

The controversy over home school as an educational alternative is heating up with adversarial claims to negative factors. In a presented paper, author VanGalen (1987) proposed the idea that the conflict between home scholars and supporters of traditional education is essentially a principled power struggle between parents and schools. Arons (1981) illustrates that the value conflicts between parents and schools can be seen in court litigation as well as in the creation of school policy and structure.

A study by Riegle (1998) attempted to identify the relationship between home school families and public superintendents in Indiana, by polling the entire population of Indiana school district superintendents. Conclusions include that the Indiana public school superintendents probably have a weaker relationship with the home school parents in their school district than they believe. This study also mentions that home school families desire more interaction with the public schools than they are currently receiving. Indiana superintendents are not knowledgeable about the reasons for pursuing home schooling, nor do they recognize home school parental concerns such as safety, academics, and problems with the public schools. The population in this study represents

the home school population in the United States. Interestingly enough, while the public perception of home schooling is improving significantly, this study cites that the superintendents' perceptions of home schools have changed little since 1985.

Superintendents believe that they should require these students to participate in mandatory testing. A recommendation is that certification of home school teachers be initiated with mandatory registration in Indiana. Mandatory licensing and certification are being challenged by the Home School Legal Defense Association because outside agencies are not able to adequately assess the skills needed for home schooling (Rudner, 1992; Farris, 1999a).

Another study by Gray (1998) indicates negative perceptions to home schooling. Educators respond that they perceive the terms 'home schooling' and 'independent study' to be synonymous. Teachers may not be a knowledge base of the movement or its impact on public schools. Nor do they realize the growth or capacity of the movement to impinge upon their territory.

Negative attitudes towards home schooling require the need for a legal defense association. The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) supports home school networks for a myriad of reasons. In a home school court report published by HSLDA (1999), articles containing information about the United States Senate and various political pressures upon home schoolers were noted. Included in this collection of articles was Barbara Bush's admission of prejudice against home schooling, as well as articles concerning difficulties facing home schoolers. Home schools feel an urgent need to restore a biblical view to education and the traditional family. Accordingly, included in these articles was the full text of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1990. This

periodical illustrates the high degree of activism and advocacy that the religious faction of the home school population displays.

The area of compulsory education is also an issue. Home schooling and the law is discussed in a policy bulletin in Indiana. It identifies controversies and current legislation pending to attempt to regulate the movement (McCarthy, 1992).

Institutions have challenged the rights of parents to educate their children at home. Since each state has compulsory school attendance laws, parents experience a wide array of problems when they withhold their children from school, including prosecution (Deckard, 1986). A summary of court cases is provided in a Wisconsin Legislative Memorandum indicating the challenges to the constitutionality of home schooling. This memorandum indicates the right of equal protection under the 14th amendment (Henkel, 1990). This reference to protection under the United States Constitution has been made by numerous authors (Preiss, 1989; Henkel, 1990). Due to the amount of political pressure, public schools are moving closer in tolerance (Natale, 1992). According to Natale (1992), all fifty states now allow some kind of home schooling. Four states allow students to take part in extracurricular activities and only one district in California provides funds to families for textbook purchases.

As the home schooling movement develops, parents may apply more pressure to legislators to change these conditions. Angelis (1998) explored this evolving relationship at length. Findings of Angelis research concluded that there is increasingly more involvement with public resources in terms of dual enrollment, sports eligibility, and academic achievement.

Summary

The state of affairs for the traditional school includes controversy regarding alternative education. Public confidence seems to be eroding and educators are involved in a struggle to identify the factors that may facilitate better results. Government concern as well as political pressure affects schools significantly today because of the increased involvement of legislators in policy setting. Beginning with the Bush administration, critics used economic indicators to point to poor school performance globally which has led to a considerable amount of outside interest in both the reform and the management of public schools. Due to a myriad of reform movements and solutions, parents are now opting to create educational environments in the home. Initial renewed interest in home schooling was due primarily to religious reasons. But numbers of home-schooled children are increasing significantly due to perceptions of increasing risk in achievement and safety. Yet, despite popularity, this venue is not without criticism and controversy. Legal battles still remain and research demonstrates through surveys that a principled power struggle exists as a basis for this confrontation. Court prosecution and litigation necessitates the need for a legal defense association with wide membership and influence.

Studies argue higher performance in academic achievement among home schooled children with little or no contradictions. In fact, home schooled students perform at higher rates in post secondary options as well.

While numerous studies have been done on home schooling, the body of research about instructional and environmental aspects of this practice needs to be increased.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Overview

The basic research study, based in the philosophical tradition of phenomenology, will attempt to determine what home schooling means to those involved in the practice. Patton (1990) describes phenomenology inquiry as “a means to using naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experience in context to specific settings” (p. 13). In this emergent form of study, the strategy of naturalistic inquiry will allow the investigator to be open to whatever emerges from the data – it is in a sense a discovery approach (Creswell, 1998). Interview techniques will provide a foundation for thematic patterns to emerge from individual experiences of the interviewed home schooling population. Data analysis will be accomplished by analysis of the data under four investigative categories: Curriculum, Teaching Decisions, Teaching Methods, and Teaching Environment/Climate.

Description of the Study

The purpose of the research is to describe the actual educational methods and instructional constructs forming the basis of instruction as well as ascertaining the educational climate in the environment. This study utilized interview data, which provided the basis for the overview of home school practices. The data was obtained with a descriptive interview instrument that attempted to identify the actual instructional

practice of home schooling according to key questions derived from research about effective educational practice (see Appendix A).

The unit of analysis will be individuals, and their relationship to the investigator will be neutral. The use of open-ended, unstructured interviews with state leaders will create the focus groups for further refinement. This funneling and use of network will then lead to the identification of focus groups. The interviews of focus groups will be used to gather data from these participants who will then identify subjects for further in-depth interviews. These will be randomly selected from the referrals from the focus interviews. The interview questioning will be then utilized to gain further insight into the actual instructional practices from the perspective of practitioner/instructor.

Procedures

The entry point of the study will be to purposefully select leaders who will have wider geographic experience and will not have colloquial bias. Using the snowball or chain sampling technique, the population will diverge and then converge as the selection of the theoretical population for interviewees emerge (Patton, 1990). This will provide a basis for triangulation in that it will provide a method of checking data gathered from subsequent participants. From these leaders, information on New Jersey State network leaders will be obtained. From that list, three focus groups will be selected based upon a wide enough geographic representation of the state of New Jersey.

In-depth, open-ended interviews of those focus groups will determine a theoretical sampling. Regional leaders will be contacted to set up the focus group interviews with the maximum of six participants. These participants will be contacted by

phone with a follow-up letter describing the procedural guidelines and will include a consent form. The introductory letter will provide an overview of the purpose of the study, discuss the protection of both anonymity and confidentiality, and include a written consent form (see Appendix B, C). The participants will be notified that if they have no objections, the interviews will be audiotaped to conserve time and lessen distractions of writing. The participants may have access to the transcripts for review. The group interviews will be arranged and conducted at a location convenient to the participants. There will be questions that are associated with the instructional methods and educational climate in the environment, which are formulated upon the basis of the guiding questions of this research. These interviews will be audiotaped and process notes will be kept on methodology and decision making procedures. Materials relating to intentions and reactions about the interview experience will also be maintained. The interview questions will be reviewed if data seems to be drifting from the main focus. The use of a script will be determined if revisions are frequent. The focus groups will be asked to provide a list of parent/guardians that home school.

From the lists, a random sample will be selected utilizing the table of random numbers. Leedy (1990) and Krathwohl (1998) describe the process of random sampling as the most frequently used method to permit blind chance to determine the outcomes of the selection process. Knowing overall population number, an arbitrary entry point will be selected. The participants will be selected by using consecutive numbers of three below or above the entry point of the sample. These key participants will be notified with the same procedures, and provided with the same protection of the focus group interviewees. The random sample will then participate in the in-depth interviews. Leedy

(1997) suggests that data is buried in the minds or the attitudes, feelings, or the reactions of men and women. The data collected in this format will be used to identify and describe the instructional practices and the climate in the environment. This impersonal way of observing data is a more discrete strategy for safeguarding exposure and identity.

Protection of Participants

Permission to participate will be obtained by phone contact and voluntary consent will be obtained by the use of a letter of introduction and a consent form (Appendix B,

C). The letter will contain the following elements:

- 1) Information about the central purpose of the study;
- 2) The participant's right to voluntarily withdraw at any time;
- 3) Comments regarding confidentiality;
- 4) Access to the final report and transcript of their interview if requested;
- 5) A statement of any risks or benefits of those participating; and
- 6) A signature of the researcher.

A self-addressed stamped reply envelope accompanying the informed consent and permission introduction letter will be provided. Anonymity is insured from the onset since the research holds no position of authority or influence over the participants. In addition, the identification of the participants will be protected by assigning a new number or pseudonym. Further, any other identifiers will be eliminated during transcription. Finally, the participants may request a copy of the transcript and final copy of the report. Confidentiality will also be maintained by coding the interviews and safekeeping of the transcripts by coding the data into thematic categories. These

categories will not have any regional or personal identifiers, but will be a horizontalization of the recurring patterns in the data.

Data Collection

In-depth, open-ended interviews will include focus groups and randomly selected individual participants. The data will be recorded by using audio recording and protocol notes during the interview. The probe for ideas and themes during the focus group interviews will lead to a further refinement of the interview instrument if necessary. The eventual result will be the collection of several categories of data relevant to this study.

Operational Procedures

Triangulation, used in all types of qualitative traditions, refers to the process of using multiple data collections, sources, analysts, or theories to check the validity of the findings (Leedy, 1997). This study employs a mixed method of data collection to provide the member checking and pattern matching necessary to assure validity and reliability. The credibility of this research will be believable from the perspective of the participant (Trochim, 1999). In order to assure that the results can be confirmed, the researcher will check and recheck data through the study for bias or distortion (Trochim, 1999). A data audit will be ongoing throughout the study.

Data Processing and Analysis

The data will be stored and organized in files after conversion from the narrative audiotapes. The complete text will be included in this report. The data will be searched

for themes and each of these themes will have a tagged category. In the sorting and cross-referencing of the data, compression will occur. This will then be accomplished by a descriptive diagram. Eventually, this will generate a visual representation of analysis (Creswell, 1998). Eventually, a coding of significant statements and themes of meanings will be funneled down to major and minor categories which will provide a textural and structural description of the educational practice, while developing an overall description of the experience. The survey data will be analyzed similarly, and visualization of the findings will be presented by tables.

The list of interview questions as divided by categories will set the parameters for analysis by presenting the data under the four investigative areas of curriculum, teaching decisions, teaching methodology, and teaching environment (see Appendix A).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of the study, given the increase in the popular use of home schooling, was to understand the insider's perspective, emergent themes, patterns of instructional approaches as well as provide a description of the atmosphere in which these occur. This chapter contains the results of the study in aggregate form, based upon the responses collected by qualitative interviews conducted with eight members of the study population. The data was collected by audio taping and then transcription.

The Participant Informed Consent Form (see Appendix B) was distributed to selected members according to the procedures outlined in Chapter III. Chapter IV concludes with the transcribed responses of the eight interview subjects. Each of the four subsidiary questions are covered within the responses of each participant. The data follows verbatim to allow the reader the opportunity to formulate interpretation. The data was then organized according to the subsidiary questions.

Subsidiary Questions

The data contained in this chapter reflects verbatim the interviews that were completed. The subsidiary questions were couched in the inquiries to gain access to information regarding the subcategories of effective schooling practices. The subsidiary questions were as follows:

- 1) What are the instructional objectives?;
- 2) How are educational decisions made on content?;
- 3) How are these decisions implemented?;
- 4) What instructional format is utilized?;
- 5) How are materials and resources utilized?; and
- 6) What is the environment in the home school?

Presentation of Interviews

Interview I

- Interviewer: Why did you choose to home school?
- Respondent I: To give my children a higher quality of education, one-on-one learning, to help teach them the basics.
- Interviewer: Do you use a pre-planned curriculum? If so, where did you obtain it?
- Respondent I: Yes, we use a pre-planned curriculum. We order the lesson plans through the mail. My particular lesson plans that I order are from Idaho. It's a Catholic School curriculum, called Our Lady of Victory School, and for one child, it costs about \$40, including the lesson plans. Everything is stated, every single assignment that is expected is written here, and you just fill it in, and then there are certain works to be sent to the school to grade, and they send the report cards through the mail. Back and forth. Purchase curriculum at the beginning of the year, send work once every two weeks, and then they return the work graded, and once every quarter, you receive a report card, and it's all done for you.
- Interviewer: How do you manage instruction and organize the school day?
- Respondent I: When we were home schooling all three of the children, we had a classroom, and we woke up in the morning at 7:00 every morning, everyone got dressed and had to be in the classroom by 8:00.
- Interviewer: So they were dressed?

- Respondent I:** Dressed, ate their breakfast, brushed their teeth, and had to be in the classroom by 8:00. We would work from 8 until 10:30, take a break, go back one half hour later, and work for another three hours or so, and, until we completed the work for the day. We personally had to keep very organized.
- Interviewer:** They didn't balk or anything?
- Respondent I:** They tried at the beginning.
- Interviewer:** Yes?
- Respondent I:** But, you know, once they got used to the routine, it was just a regular school day. I have only one here that I am home schooling. We are much more laid back about it.
- Interviewer:** Does he get dressed in the morning?
- Respondent I:** Oh, yeah, he has to get dressed, but he has migraine headaches and things like that, so he's better off here. He has allergies. So what we do here is when he gets a migraine headache or if he doesn't feel well, we break according to his needs, and it works out very well. It's easy to work it that way with just one here.
- Interviewer:** Where do you work?
- Respondent I:** We work at the dining room table. Our classroom is now a bedroom.
- Interviewer:** Do you have a structured routine or time line? Like a time line for what you do during the day?
- Respondent I:** As I said before, we are not that structured this year, since I am only home schooling the one son. I mean, there have been times when we've gotten back to it in the evening, but very structured --
- Interviewer:** How about your time line?
- Respondent I:** Up till this year? Time line, a certain amount of time per subject?
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent I:** Basically, it takes the same amount of time each day. It's 60 minutes to 75 minutes for math, 45 minutes to an hour for English.
- Interviewer:** So they're about the same time?

- Respondent I:** We spend about the same time every day on each subject, unless it's you know, a special assignment or something we need to spend more time on – looking things up.
- Interviewer:** How do you assure effective utilization of the learning time? How do you get him to stay on task?
- Respondent I:** I sit with him. I'm here right in the same room with him. We work together on the lessons, and then when I'm sure he understands what he's doing, he'll go and finish the lesson. But basically, I'm right here all the time. We work together.
- Interviewer:** Okay. How do you make educational decisions about what and when to teach a determined content area? And I guess in your case, it's already, as you said, it's pre-planned?
- Respondent I:** Yes, everything here with us is pre-planned, as I said before. We follow a set of lesson plans, and we send all the expected work in. It's Our Lady of Victory School from Idaho, and we receive the paper and fill everything in. So, those decisions I leave up to someone else.
- Interviewer:** In your curriculum planning, do you employ technology?
- Respondent I:** Computer use?
- Interviewer:** Yes, or a word processor?
- Respondent I:** Yes, we use the computer to look up information and to type papers, and basically just to find information. That's all we do as far as technology.
- Interviewer:** What type of instruction do you employ?
- Respondent I:** One to one.
- Interviewer:** I assume yours is direct instruction and not independent? Are you directly instructing?
- Respondent I:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Tell me how you introduce your lessons or how they allow you to introduce it.
- Respondent I:** Okay. Direct Instruction. As I said, we sit together, go over the plans.

- Interviewer: So, you go over this plan first with your child?
- Respondent I: Right. We'll just take one subject at a time. First you read and have to understand the lesson. And then, by the time we're finished with that, I'll spend like 15 or 20 minutes or however much time is needed with teaching the lesson and making sure it's understood. And then, there are always exercises for him to do by himself, after I'm sure he understands the lesson.
- Interviewer: Oh, so it has both instruction and reinforcement then?
- Respondent I: Right. Both instruction and reinforcement.
- Interviewer: All right. Do you have expected goals or outcomes for instruction? I guess in the case of Our Lady of Victory, they have that. Do they tell you that? How do you know what he's expected to do? Does it have it on here?
- Respondent I: No, you just have to figure out what the lesson is, and put the percentage down.
- Interviewer: So, is the sequence done by the school then? You don't make any decisions about what the goals should be then?
- Respondent I: Not really. The only thing I do is if something is not understood, we'll just continue studying it and going over it until it's perfectly understood.
- Interviewer: How do you provide for other learning opportunities, like field trips, etc.?
- Respondent I: A lot of people that home school that we're connected with from home schooling -- a lot of them arrange field trips. Recently, we've gone to Sandy Hook and my son has gone in with the big boots and the nets, and --
- Interviewer: Somebody organizes these trips?
- Respondent I: Somebody will organize it, just like a regular class trip.
- Interviewer: Do they regulate them?
- Respondent I: They do a lot of interesting things. You know, they do it on a regular basis, and we join in whenever we can. We'll go -- sometimes.

- Interviewer:** Do they ever tell you what's coming up?
- Respondent I:** Yes, they notify us -- they give us a call. Sometimes, we'll get a flyer in the mail from another group, who gets together and does things. They have done a lot of interesting things.
- Interviewer:** Are they structured groups or do they just group together?
- Respondent I:** They are just groups that meet for field trips and things. Basically, everyone home schools their own children alone and gets together for field trips and things like that, or sometimes we'll do a lot of things alone, just go somewhere interesting.
- Interviewer:** Arts or science, or just anything?
- Respondent I:** Well, for a lot of years when they were younger, we used to take their science book and do it in the parks with the bugs and things like that, and you know, just different things. Whatever comes up, we'll join if we can. A lot of it is spontaneous and some of it is pre-planned.
- Interviewer:** How is feedback and reinforcement for instructional concepts accomplished?
- Respondent I:** Basically, we just, he knows what's expected of him. He does his work, and I give him verbal praise and let him know when he does a good job, and he likes to hear that. That's how we work it.
- Interviewer:** What is your environment? You said that you are sitting in a structured environment at the table with a student-teacher interaction. Do you get provided instructions? Does he talk a lot or is it mostly seat work interactions?
- Respondent I:** We do it both ways. There are quite a few things that we'll discuss orally for a while, especially as far as in history or science. Instruction is normally given, and then there is also seatwork to be done by himself.
- Interviewer:** Back and forth?
- Respondent I:** Back and forth. Different, depending on the assignment and depending on what's going on for the day.
- Interviewer:** Does he ever tell you that he has to stop?

- Respondent I:** Oh yes. If he's having a problem, he'll talk to me about it and we'll just stop and we'll work on it, talk about it, make sure it's understood, and then go back to it.
- Interviewer:** Okay, good. Is there a difference in your behavior standards for school activities? Are you more strict in the school setting than you would be around the house or in social settings?
- Respondent I:** I think it works about the same for everything. I don't think I'm any different.
- Interviewer:** There is no difference?
- Respondent I:** I don't think there is a difference.
- Interviewer:** So you have no different expectations behaviorally?
- Respondent I:** Yes, behaviorally, yes. Absolutely.
- Interviewer:** How are expectations set and do you utilize any incentives or rewards?
- Respondent I:** Didn't we do that?
- Interviewer:** Expectations were from the curriculum.
- Respondent I:** Right. All of our expectations come from our curriculum, so we know exactly what to expect each week, and you get used to it, you get used to the whole routine.
- Interviewer:** You don't use any incentives?
- Respondent I:** We don't really use incentives and rewards and things like that, just verbal praise.
- Interviewer:** How do you maintain interest in self-initiation for your son/daughter?
- Respondent I:** How do you maintain discipline? After you do this for a while, the children know what's expected of them and basically they do it with, you know, no problem. So --
- Interviewer:** So, you don't need to motivate them in any way?
- Respondent I:** No, no. If we need to -- You know, there are interesting things suggested to do, so we'll do them together, and --

- Interviewer:** Do you ever switch from one subject to another to keep him motivated? If he's tired of one, do you go to another?
- Respondent I:** Yes. Every now and then we will do that. If there's a very heavy math assignment that will take a long time, he'll say, oh my head needs a break from math, so we'll move on and we'll do something light, like read the reading for the day and discuss it, or something like that. That has been done.
- Interviewer:** How do you know when a lesson is learned, and what determines your decision to move ahead?
- Respondent I:** Right. I can tell how a lesson is learned by -- there is always an assignment following that he has to do on his own after we go over a lesson. So, if that assignment is not done well, then we have to go back and re-learn that lesson, and that's how we know whether it's absolutely learned and understood. And, when it's learned and understood, we move ahead.
- Interviewer:** So what assessment models are used in terms of monitoring progress from your pre-planned, paid curriculum? Do they have tests? You talked about tests.
- Respondent I:** Yes. We do have tests -- There is a lot of testing. There is a test in each subject each week, and those tests are sent to school for grading, and at the end of the year, there are ways we can take it. It's not the CTBS that the kids take in the public schools right now, but it's on the same level, it's the Iowa tests, and we order then, and we test the children at the end of the year, just the one child right now.
- Interviewer:** And they send you the results back?
- Respondent I:** And we get the results back, and find out how everyone is doing. We've never had a problem yet. So far, everyone has been on schedule, or maybe even a little ahead.
- Interviewer:** Do they have regular report cards or monthly progress reports?
- Respondent I:** Regular report cards.
- Interviewer:** How often?
- Respondent I:** Quarterly.
- Interviewer:** Quarterly?

- Respondent I:** Four report cards a year.
- Interviewer:** The tests are pre-planned?
- Respondent I:** The tests actually come in my package with the curriculum. They are test booklets. I tear it out and give them the test when it's time, and then just mail it to the school.
- Interviewer:** How often do you mail things? Once a month?
- Respondent I:** Every two weeks.
- Interviewer:** Every two weeks?
- Respondent I:** They expect you to mail it every two weeks. Sometimes I do it once a month, to get all the work together.
- Interviewer:** But, you don't fall off-line?
- Respondent I:** No, no. It all gets mailed to the school, and --
- Interviewer:** Have you had any training or do you seek resource support for your instruction? You obviously need support --
- Respondent I:** I haven't had any. I'm not a teacher or in the education system, which is why we use everything pre-scheduled, pre-planned and all written out so we can just follow this curriculum here and send the work in. It easier.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent I:** You don't have to make up the whole arrangement yourself and the lesson plans.

Interview II

Interviewer: Why did you choose to home school?

Respondent II: I don't know if I chose to home school or home schooling chose me. My older sons used all types of different teaching methods, private schools, and public schools with an IEP. And I put a whole lot of energy into their educational process, trying to make the schools do what they needed, and then I got my next son, who is now 14 years old – he was very uneven. He was going to have a lot of learning issues and a lot of the brain development stuff that I had seen was just a matter of time. It was a matter of expecting a 5-year-old to do what a 9-year-old could do. But a 5-year-old brain did not. And, so he went to a preschool. He insisted on going to a preschool, and he loved it. But I felt very conflicted because he worked well independently, and I had to force him to stop working on things to go to school. And, I reached a point in his kindergarten year when he had to just set up prisms, so he could shine a light through one to make it a rainbow, and since that rainbow into another to make it back into white light. And, he was really impressed, and he showed me that he had discovered that you could put the rainbow back together again by using the same process with a second prism, and I said, "Now put that away and put your shoes on, you have to get to school. Miss Dawn is going to be mad if you're late again." And I never wanted to hear myself do that to him, and so people in the park mentioned home school, and I said –

Interviewer: In the park?

Respondent II: Yeah, just in passing.

Interviewer: Oh really, like in the city park, playing?

Respondent II: Yeah, just playing in the park. People came up to us and told us about a wonderful, gifted and talented institute because it was clear he would do well there, and they told us –

Interviewer: About home schooling?

Respondent II: Some people mentioned home schooling. So for his kindergarten year, we went ahead and put him in a Montessori kindergarten for half the day, and the other half, we networked with home scholars to try it ourselves and see. And then, we had a family meeting at the end of the year to say which was more valuable. Meanwhile, I

was planning on doing the public school kindergarten, and they just said all the wrong things, the things you shouldn't say. They –

Interviewer: What were they?

Respondent II: He read very well, but he couldn't write at all. He was getting there because he loved numbers and he loved mathematical formulas, and he was working on trigonometry type concepts, which is normally Montessori. Montessori realizes that it is a 4-year-old brain process and they give it to him then, so geometry is done with 4 year olds, and so, he was trying writing and clearly, his brain was going to come in, but it wasn't there, and it was very frustrating to him. And so, they said they would make sure that he had appropriate reading material in the classroom -- something to his interest level and reading level for after he was done with his writing dittos.

Interviewer: Dittos?

Respondent II: Well, the writing sheets.

Interviewer: Oh, sheets.

Respondent II: For practicing -- writing sheets. They don't say dittos anymore, but they are. I mean, so they make them on a Xerox machine. Anyway, the thought of him having to sit there and form letters before they would allow him to read, when he could do so graciously. I mean, he really loved reading. And, they weren't building; they were building to the weakness instead of building to the strength. So we decided to do it ourselves. And so, we just let him do projects he wanted to do that required him to write -- to make a craft, you write. To do art, you write. And the brain connections were being formed, but not by sitting and doing something he wasn't interested in for long periods of time. You know, he didn't have to sit and try to write.

Interviewer: Do you use a pre-planned curriculum -- if so, where did you obtain it? If you don't, what do you -- you know, what course of study do you use? How did you decide upon a curriculum?

Respondent II: Okay.

Interviewer: Tell me about the process.

Respondent II: In some ways, I do a pre-planned curriculum. Pre-planned isn't the word. I use a curriculum guide.

- Interviewer: Oh?
- Respondent II: I use the overview guide. I always get the year curriculum that he would be having in the school.
- Interviewer: From the district?
- Respondent II: From the district -- for topical reasons. If they are talking about Indians, I know in scouts. Everybody is going to pick Indians as their topic when they have a theme or something. And, he knows the language, so I give him the list, and then he knows ahead of time to read a book or two about Indians, and then he can relate well.
- Interviewer: To the group?
- Respondent II: To the group. So other places he's going to run into people who are working on Indians. So we always check and see what they're doing.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Respondent II: For a theme.
- Interviewer: So it's almost like a compass, more for --
- Respondent II: We, are not trying to make him learn about Indians. We're offering him a chance to keep up easily socially.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Respondent II: By knowing Indian lingo.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Respondent II: He always knows more than they do on the subject just by reading a couple of books, because they have had to do a bunch of assignments that didn't really mean anything to him. And he's just read a couple of interesting books, so he's got the content, and whatever it is they're getting. So then, I have curriculum guides that I use, which is a checklist, which I got from the unschoolers, and it took, they take curriculum, and they reduce it to the things that are in different grades. And, I just flip through, about four grades at a time usually, and check off the things that he's got done. So that, if I can see there is a glaring something, I know it.

In the beginning, it was important for me to try to present it to him, but through experience, I found it really wasn't important at all.

Interviewer: He got it on his own?

Respondent II: He would eventually get there. Usually about seven months after I thought I was going to go crazy, that he would go, like a year without no language arts or something, I would just say to myself, 'Oh man, this kid is really falling behind - he doesn't know the classics.' I was worried it would reach a point that he would say, "I hear people talking about classics that I haven't read, and I see at the library, they are having a book discussion group, can I try it?" Sometimes he goes to an adult one. He went to a writing program at the senior citizen's center.

Interviewer: He takes self-initiative and starts?

Respondent II: Right. He'll see something on a board and say, "Oh, a writing course that lasts six weeks, that sounds good." He'll check it out. And so he calls and says, "Will you take a 9-year-old in the senior citizen program?" and a lot of times, they say yes.

Interviewer: They do?

Respondent II: So, he'll go with them.

Interviewer: So, how do you manage instruction and organize the school day, if there is one?

Respondent II: I don't.

Interviewer: You don't - so it's unstructured?

Respondent II: I don't manage the instruction. I don't have responsibility for the instruction. We have a computerized scheduling program that he uses to plan out so that he can arrange rides to where he needs to go, and books, or if he needs my time. In creating a project, I tend to be very high [---]. It's very easy for me to create a project, and I can usually in short order, come up with an outline of this -- this is the way to do this, so he can book some of my time to say, "I want to learn about castles. I'm just fascinated. There is something about the energy of castles that fascinates me." Then, I say, "Okay, what about castles? Why are they built? When are they built? How are they built? What is it you want to know about castles?" And, well, the whens, the whys, in that order. First the hows are the most important. And so he, no I, suggested to look

up castles – see if you can focus on an area of kinds of castles you're interested in, or a type of design. There is a book I remembered called The Castles of New Jersey, that there is probably 20 something castles that have been built in New Jersey.

Interviewer: Yes, I know.

Respondent II: Okay, so I tell him to get the books and give me a list and we'll go. That's a good – it's getting to be a good time for running around, so we'll go do that. And –

Interviewer: So, he kind of structures his day when he needs you and then you dedicate your time and focus on him. He focuses on you, rather than you focusing on him?

Respondent II: That would be an example of him needing to brainstorm on castles. And then, I found a historical stone mason that he has been apprenticing with this week.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent II: Say 'wow' on my chimney on the way out, because they did an excellent job when I got my chimney repaired.

Interviewer: So, you don't have a routine, structured time line that you sit down and dedicate to school?

Respondent II: I don't.

Interviewer: So, when does school happen?

Respondent II: School never happens.

Interviewer: So, learning happens all the time?

Respondent II: Learning always happens, school never happens.

Interviewer: School never happens? So, you don't have to assure learning time is utilized appropriately because it's always ongoing?

Respondent II: Well, no, we do. In some ways -- He lays out what his schedule is going to be.

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent II: But, he's a kid, and I help him stay on task.

- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent II:** So, the video games are after. If – I mean, he can decide. But I, as his mother, will stop in and say, "I see you're not doing what you were planning on doing, what's the change in schedule? Does this alter my schedule?" And, sometimes he'll put something off and expect a ride to make up of it, and it doesn't happen.
- Interviewer:** I see.
- Respondent II:** So, there is a time line. It's just not my time line.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent II:** And as far as structured routine, that is a different matter than the schooling routine; that's a living routine. It took us a lot of time and incorporations. They would teach us to take an hour to meditate and take an hour to exercise and that kind of structure is a living structure and is important.
- Interviewer:** The structure?
- Respondent II:** And, it's important to me to help him establish a structure for his life.
- Interviewer:** Like having a frame to fit in?
- Respondent II:** Right. Well, to make, to be able to balance time, to be able to get exercise in, to be able to rest your eyes on the horizon, as my great aunt used to say. That was her answer to eye problems. Because, for any of us that were fanatic readers, every hour, you have to rest your eyes on the horizon.
- Interviewer:** The horizon?
- Respondent II:** To stretch your eyes, to relax your eyes you have to look at the full distance. And, that kind of balance is part of structuring a life. And, I think when people talk about school structuring somebody, I think that's actually backwards. Because, if they don't learn how to structure themselves –
- Interviewer:** That's right. We will talk about that later. How do you make educational decisions about what and when to teach a determined content area? I guess it's from your guide?
- Respondent II:** No. I don't teach.

- Interviewer: No?
- Respondent II: As far as what and when, is what he's interested in.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Respondent II: If he's interested in something like castle building. Now, he hasn't read about, even the geography of the areas of Europe, it's not been a place he's attacked – so that would be something that I would make sure books that had castles were, if it was castles.
- Interviewer: So, in essence, when you're assessing what's going on with him, you're also guiding him to places he should be, to gain more data? Is that right?
- Respondent II: Well, in the way of exchanging and sharing. If a friend of mine tells me they're interested in plumbing, I might recommend a good plumbing book that I've read.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Respondent II: If he tells me he's interested in castles, I may find a castle book that I know of, that would be good for him.
- Interviewer: Yes.
- Respondent II: It really isn't that different from adults doing self-study. But, educational decisions and what/when for content, what I was starting to say is, if he wants to learn about space, but he hasn't had physics, I will point out and help him address physics in order to be able to keep up his pace.
- Interviewer: Okay. So you fill in the missing parts as it were. In your curriculum planning, do you employ, is it technology-employed instruction on the computer?
- Respondent II: Yes, he's on the Internet a lot. That's a biggie. He uses it well. He's doing beta testing for a number of people that have packages for self-taught home schoolers. He does reports for them. He tests their stuff.
- Interviewer: Stuff?
- Respondent II: I'm still hoping that we'll find one that will set up a portfolio for him, but he hasn't.

- Interviewer: He has gotten any yet?
- Respondent II: Well actually, I think the programs haven't gotten here. I think it's not him.
- Interviewer: Too linear?
- Respondent II: Well, there is one that actually too broad.
- Interviewer: Oh, really?
- Respondent II: And it requires you to know educationalease before you start, to know why you're putting it into those terms, but it's a very interesting one because it uses the seven learning languages styles, too. And, it flashes up things, like you know, for this approach, you might try --
- Interviewer: Any other technology? I mean videos etc.
- Respondent II: He does do some videos. He loves the standard deviants, I think we own a million of those. They are just his kind of dry humor. Other technology would be lasers.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Respondent II: Robotics. He's into heavy mechanical and now he's to a point that he is having interface back into the schools because of it. We just cannot provide an entire budget for, like robotics contests. He's been following robotics contests. He just found a way last night onto a team in S----- High School.
- Interviewer: Oh, really?
- Respondent II: So, he's going to join their robotics team.
- Interviewer: And, they'll allow him?
- Respondent II: Yeah.
- Interviewer: Do you have to go through the school board for that, or do you just talk to the person in charge?
- Respondent II: No. He's coming in as one of the engineers helping in the program.
- Interviewer: Oh.

- Respondent II:** And the fact that he's 14 is being ignored. I mean, they're just not going to look at it. And most of the kids are like 17, because it's an older science program. But, I think that's going to work for him. So, that's an example of technology. He works one day a week at the science museum. He teaches younger kids, the field trips, when they go and do things. Here's a thing on color or here's a thing on whatever. He teaches that, in exchange he gets to use the laser lab, and they just got a simulator in, one of those ...
- Interviewer:** Okay, so you don't instruct, so it's self-directed learning. So, we talked about that.
- Respondent II:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Do you have expected goals or outcomes for his instruction or the instruction, or do you have a vision of what -- What's the vision?
- Respondent II:** No, but you realize we're only telling you about one of the kids, and I have a second that is very different.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent II:** And, the answers would be very different for her on some of this because she does respond to instruction.
- Interviewer:** Okay -- younger?
- Respondent II:** He has never --
- Interviewer:** Never, different learning styles then?
- Respondent II:** Very different styles.
- Interviewer:** Uh huh. So for her then, you would have expected outcomes or --?
- Respondent II:** For her, I would plan ahead a bit more to give her exposure to something. She learns mostly by osmosis, so I have to arrange for somebody to learn it next to her.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent II:** And that seems to be what I'm going to have to do.
- Interviewer:** So you'll have to network with another family to -- ?
- Respondent II:** Right.

- Interviewer: More content?
- Respondent II: Right, so we're building a cooperative – cooperative kind of instructional group – that we're going to do – four or five families together for her.
- Interviewer: Oh, okay.
- Respondent II: As far as expected goals or outcomes, we've just started with contracting -- he sets the goal.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Respondent II: And contracts on what he's going to do for it.
- Interviewer: Right, and then you can -- He changes it if he doesn't feel like it that day, or --
- Respondent II: Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer: Or does he contract everyday?
- Respondent II: No, no, no.
- Interviewer: Biweekly then?
- Respondent II: No, it could be yearly. He had one project that took four years with the chickens.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Respondent II: That's how we got into chickens. These are the ones that lay blue eggs. And he was fascinated because somebody had a mixed flock – that had different colored eggs being laid, and so he wanted to know if the probability of laying a blue egg increased if you hatched from a blue egg. And, that took --
- Interviewer: Four years for him to find out?
- Respondent II: Four years of generations to have him explore it in enough dimensions that he could answer that question.
- Interviewer: How many years is the generation of a chicken?
- Respondent II: Oh, you can do two generations a year.

- Interviewer:** Oh, okay.
- Respondent II:** But, he had to learn genetics. He had to go to the agricultural college and so research there, and, but that was something that couldn't be answered, like 'by next Tuesday, I'm going to write a paper,' – he really hasn't done that kind of goal much. You know, sometimes there is a fill in just because he wants to be like the others.
- Interviewer:** So, you don't provide learning opportunities, they are kind of –
- Respondent II:** I provide a lot of learning opportunities.
- Interviewer:** Okay, but I meant like –
- Respondent II:** Because of his style the only way I can see this working is to maintain a rich environment.
- Interviewer:** Right, okay.
- Respondent II:** I have a database of tutors. I network with people to say, what would you like to teach a child. I start senior citizen mentor programs, working with kids, and so, he's got access to a lot of things because of my footwork. When he says, this sounds good to me, I've got an answer for that. And, in the meantime, a lot of other kids have had answers, too.
- Interviewer:** It helps, right? So the networking helps?
- Respondent II:** It's a bigger network –
- Interviewer:** So that, the learning opportunities are like an outreach?
- Respondent II:** How I provide learning opportunities is to find interested people. One of my major commitments to him in home schooling was that he would only learn a subject from somebody who loved it.
- Interviewer:** Someone with a passion?
- Respondent II:** It had to be somebody that loved that particular subject because I wanted him to know why they loved it, not just know the subject. And so, for math, he went to the science institute to the math department, which is all retired engineers that really wish a kid would ask them a question, and you can spend a day in there and grow miles as a kid, if you just talk to them.

- Interviewer: Talk to them?
- Respondent II: And, they're not used to kids that talk, so they'll give lots of time to any kid that talks. So, he learned his math from them. I was worried for a while, that he would want to grow up to be retired, like how do I explain that they've worked first? And get work ethic in there somewhere, but I think I'm relaxing a little on that one. Everybody he emulated, everybody he wanted to be like when he grew up was 60, 70, 80 years old and retired.
- Interviewer: So, he gains feedback and reinforcement for what he learns through his own?
- Respondent II: Through interaction with people who know the subject.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Respondent II: When he can talk – Now that he has the science museum, it's people that are used to teaching kid so when a kid comes in and is able to teach that subject, it stretches them – and that's feedback to him.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Respondent II: That he's in a next level, that he has accomplished a certain point to get that feedback from them. But, mostly, he doesn't care. He has dedicated his life to being out of the box, even out of his mother's boxes, and that's probably his biggest success. If you ask him, you know, 'What do you want?' -- 'What's your goal?' -- and his goal is to stay out of the box.
- Interviewer: Creatively?
- Respondent II: He finds the way.
- Interviewer: So, the environment or a student-teacher interaction is more, you're more of a mentor than an instructor? What is the environment?
- Respondent II: Well, if I'm teaching him something, because there are things that I'm a logical choice to teach. It's more of a sharing session, and it's really the same with any teacher that he relates to.
- Interviewer: Right – more dialogue?
- Respondent II: Yeah.

- Interviewer: More dialogue?
- Respondent II: More dialogue or team exploration. He has some friends that he works with, and he's working with a college professor too. They are running through -- the guy's writing a textbook, and so he runs through the chapters and says, 'That's bogus.' And as he helps the guy write the textbook, the guy is running everything in the textbook into him, and he's CLEP testing in another month for that course. But it's a common search; they are doing it together.
- Interviewer: Together?
- Respondent II: So, they'll try and experiment and see how it works.
- Interviewer: Like a prototype, kind of? Is there a difference in the behavioral standards for school activities?
- Respondent II: That's an interesting question. If I had to, as like instructional time needs to be treated differently, when he was little, it was particularly important to me the difference between tools and toys. And, that lab equipment is always treated as lab equipment. It doesn't become space ships.
- Interviewer: I see.
- Respondent II: He has two sets of Legos. He has Legos robotics and he has regular Legos. And he may use regular Legos in his projects for robotics, but he doesn't take it from the robotics for his regular projects. So, there is, the materials need to be intact and available for when he's doing an educational project as it was designed, and he can't arbitrarily, but he may design a lab project that requires something else, or he may buy an extra petri dish because he really needs it in the space program.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Respondent II: There are times he could use, but that would be --
- Interviewer: The only standards that may vary are the materials used?
- Respondent II: Yeah, respect for materials is probably the difference, but I guess if he were to trash his toys, that might not be a difference, now that I think about it. I mean he's not welcome to trash them either.
- Interviewer: How are expectations set and do you utilize any incentives or rewards? And I think you talked about that.

- Respondent II:** Not a chance. He has himself, he did the Pizza Hut Book-It Program, and he reads books that he didn't want to in exchange for a pizza because that was the only way he could see to set a goal that would be equivalent for the program. So, he made himself read, actually made himself read children's novels.
- Interviewer:** So, that's how he maintains interest and self-initiation, he does it himself.
- Respondent II:** He's not having to force himself to maintain interest, he doesn't always. Sometimes, he'll get into something he thinks he wants to do, and he'll get part-way in and realize he's already learned the part he was interested in. And he doesn't go the rest of the way into it.
- Interviewer:** So he stops?
- Respondent II:** So he stops. And sometimes it sits on a shelf for three years, and then he wants to know the next set, I mean for that, he wants the rest of it, and he can go back and pick up, and other times, I think it just wasn't the interest he thought. He got the part he wanted and went on.
- Interviewer:** And went on, okay. How does he know when a lesson is learned or you know when the lesson is learned, or learning is taking place I guess? And what determines your decision to move ahead, or I guess move on? Like he says he's done, so I guess it's from what it sounds like to me, is that you're, he's --
- Respondent II:** He's exploring the world on his terms.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent II:** So, it's not a matter of, 'we're done with this, you can do something else.' We don't start with 'there is this you have to do.' We do use references. He has a chart of what normal high school requirements are, that he can chart up to know when he's done.
- Interviewer:** Oh, okay. Just for self-evaluation kind of thing -- just for self-monitoring.
- Respondent II:** Yeah, or if he needs to report to anybody, the college has welcomed him into classes there. He hasn't been interested.
- Interviewer:** What college?

- Respondent II:** R----- V-----.
- Interviewer:** Oh really?
- Respondent II:** Actually, W----- C----- is a little closer and they said fine too. R----- V----- asked that he wait until he's 13, that when he was 11 they admitted he could fit in the classes, but because of the way they had a program they were building to work with the high schools, they really wanted to wait until he was in high school age range, before starting – just not to put a conflict there.
- Interviewer:** So, they didn't have any real admission problems, but just the age itself for social reasons, they didn't want to?
- Respondent II:** Individual interviews have to be done by the professor. He has to interview to get into a course.
- Interviewer:** Oh. But, they had no problems with that? If the professor says, "yes," he can be in?
- Respondent II:** Right. And if the professor's a crud, we didn't want him there anyway.
- Interviewer:** I guess the last question is, have you had any training or do you seek resource support for what you do?
- Respondent II:** Assessment models.
- Interviewer:** Oh, assessment model? What is that? Assessment model, you've told me the high school – he gauges himself by the high school criteria? But I think assessment is how well he's doing or you know, how do you judge what learning is accomplished?
- Respondent II:** Well, what we're doing at the moment is with high school because it's easy to say you have to be credentialed in high school to go to college. In order to qualify for scholarships, he's got to be a graduate.
- Interviewer:** Of what?
- Respondent II:** Of high school. So –
- Interviewer:** How does that happen?
- Respondent II:** We're documenting his high school in order for him to qualify for scholarships for college. There are home –

- Interviewer: The high school is allowing you to do that?
- Respondent II: I don't --
- Interviewer: Or is it another different high school?
- Respondent II: I don't have to do it through a high school, but --
- Interviewer: It could be any high school?
- Respondent II: But, I can transfer him into the high school with all of his electives met, and they have to pay his tuition at R----- V----- because they have to continue his process. And believe me, I've thought of that. But, he's got interest in other colleges that weren't the ones they would use. I mean, they would truck him to R-----. And he's got other things he would be interested in, so what's he's doing is putting together -- he's taking CLEP test and I don't remember what the -- I think the level for college achievement is like 70 percent, it's really not that high, 70 to 80, but the level to be considered high school is 50. So, I've just said that's the deal, 50 percent, you're tested, you're done. It goes down as completed in the high school transcript. If you happen to get 70-80, which of course, then we can also put that in the college.
- Interviewer: So, you do the testing, or they do it, the colleges or -- ?
- Respondent II: He has to go to the college to take the test.

Interview III

- Interviewer: Why did you choose to home school?
- Respondent III: Part of the reason why, actually there was several reasons why I decided to home school. One had to do with my eldest son struggling in school with different subject areas. He was in 4th, 3rd grade, no 4th grade at that point. And, the particular school he was in had a really, not a great math program – so part of it was academic. The other part was, he was losing a lot of his sweetness that he had when he first started school.
- Interviewer: His personality was different?
- Respondent III: Yeah, big personality change. He was trying to please everybody around him and, you know, just getting stomped down a lot, in his kindness and his sweetness.
- Interviewer: Was he bullied?
- Respondent III: Yeah, at school.
- Interviewer: So you decided to remove him?
- Respondent III: Yeah.
- Interviewer: So, you actually saw a change?
- Respondent III: Yes.
- Interviewer: What grade did that take place in -- in third grade?
- Respondent III: Yeah, that started in like 2nd and 3rd grade, you know, so ... And then I saw the same thing kind of happening to my next son, not quite as much, but to that extent, and so I was just ---, and there was other things going on in the school. It was a Catholic school, and they weren't really strong in faith. They weren't teaching harisi or anything, but they were watering the faith down so much that you could barely see it.
- Interviewer: Religion?
- Respondent III: Yeah, so well ...
- Interviewer: What Diocese was it ?

- Respondent III: It was ----- . But -- I was just looking, seeking, you know to find what other options there were out there, and an aunt of mine, who was a teacher for 50 years, said do you ever think about home schooling?
- Interviewer: Your aunt knew of home schooling?
- Respondent III: Yeah, she knew of it through EWTN, which is a Catholic network. She had seen interviews on home schooling, some you know, some experts in the field that women have been home schooling for years, and so, it's very big in the Protestant communities, but we didn't really -- I had never heard of any Catholic home schooling programs or situations. I have a sister-in-law of mine, who has friends that do home schooling, but more along a Protestant level. It's Christian based.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Respondent III: So when she suggested, you know to look at it, I said sure. So, it was, I don't believe in coincidences anymore because it was just really God working in our lives, because then within two or three days after that, I had met a Priest, who was visiting, he was visiting the area and I was voicing my concerns.
- Interviewer: Here?
- Respondent III: No, it was in my area. I was just voicing my problems with the kids and school and working. I was working almost full time just trying to support their education, just trying to pay for their Catholic education, so --
- Interviewer: It had an impact upon the family?
- Respondent III: And that was a big problem because then my two younger ones are suffering because I wasn't home with them. So, he suggested -- did you ever think of home schooling?
- Interviewer: Another person?
- Respondent III: Again, within a couple of days of each other. So he gave me the name of a program and someone to speak with, which I did.
- Interviewer: In New Jersey?
- Respondent III: No, it was actually in Virginia; Seton Home Schooling Program.

Interviewer: Mother Seton?

Respondent III: Yeah, I know, right. Yeah, Mother Seton. It's a Catholic curriculum, so I contacted them, and spent the next six months really researching it, reading a lot of material, you know, looking on the Internet and within six months, I was sold 100 percent. It took my husband a little bit longer, but he came around, and by the end of the school year, because that was in September when we first thinking about it.

Interviewer: Yeah. What were his objections?

Respondent III: Just the socialization.

Interviewer: Oh?

Respondent III: Socialization of the children. Different things along those lines, you know. But, he really liked the idea of, a lot of financial savings with doing that, honestly. And, when he looked at all of the statistics and saw how well the children learned and basically what you're doing is private tutoring.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent III: And so he was sold on it. He said, give it a shot. And, all I said was that we would try it for a year and see what happens. So, by the following September, we had taken them out of school and started home schooling them in September.

Interviewer: In terms of educational choices, do you have a planned curriculum? Do you purchase curriculum? Do you make it up?

Respondent III: For the past four years, I used Seton Catholic Home Study program, and it's complete packaged curriculum, from A to Z. And, what I always said when I first started home schooling was, I needed to use a packaged curriculum because I was bringing two of my children home from school. I had two younger ones that I was going to begin home schooling at that point all together, and just the thought of having to put together my own curriculum and make up lesson plans was too overwhelming for me, so I decided to go with the packaged curriculum. I've been very happy with it. Now that I have a little bit more experience, I feel, just from doing it for so many years, that I'm looking into putting together my own curriculum next year. Because my oldest son will be in high school. He's going to be going to high school, and so I'll have the three others in 7th, 5th, and 3rd grade.

- Interviewer: He's going to go to a traditional high school, conventional high school?
- Respondent III: Well, he's discerning a vocation right now.
- Interviewer: Oh?
- Respondent III: So, he is possibly going to go to an apostle school.
- Interviewer: Oh, okay.
- Respondent III: So, if he doesn't go to the apostle school, then he'll probably go to one of the local Catholic high schools.
- Interviewer: Oh, okay, and then from there go to?
- Respondent III: Yeah, and then go from there. So, right now I'm in the process of researching different curriculums and different choices.
- Interviewer: For the elementary kids?
- Respondent III: Yes. So, I know L----- is a veteran home schooler, who has a whole curriculum that she has pieced together, you know, through the years she's been home schooling I think, probably almost 15 years.
- Interviewer: Is she from the area?
- Respondent III: No. I actually don't know where's she's from, I'm just in the process of reading her material, but I think I might follow her model, it's a classic curriculum.
- Interviewer: So then, how do you make your educational choices as to what to teach?
- Respondent III: I want to make sure everything is covered, you know, picking the right grade level for each subject as far as the math and English, and you know --
- Interviewer: Do they give you the grade level?
- Respondent III: Yeah, the program that I'm using now, it's complete. There are certain choices for certain grade levels as far as like math levels and different things like that, and I standardize test them at the end of the year to make sure they're up to par. The California Achievement Test.

- Interviewer:** Where do you get that from?
- Respondent III:** From the Seton Program
- Interviewer:** So everything is set for you in terms of the packaged curriculum?
- Respondent III:** Right.
- Interviewer:** Do you ever go away from this -- go away from the curriculum?
- Respondent III:** Well, we do. Like we don't use their music program, or some of their art stuff we do use, but because we meet on a weekly basis for those subjects, with our home schooling chapter, which has 50 families in it.
- Interviewer:** 50 families?
- Respondent III:** Yeah, here at St. -----.
- Interviewer:** Oh, okay.
- Respondent III:** And, the instructors, one is a certified teacher for art, and the other is a music instructor.
- Interviewer:** So, that's where you get the material.
- Respondent III:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** How do you deal with rewards and incentives to keep kids motivated, or do they self-initiate?
- Respondent III:** Well, it's funny. All of my children are different. I find my oldest and youngest need constant motivation, they need to be constantly spurred on, and --
- Interviewer:** How do you do that?
- Respondent III:** Well, I do that through, they have outside activities, the both of them have a lot of outside activities, between them like karate, gymnastics, and boy's club. My son is one of the leaders in a local Catholic boy's club, and so those are a really good incentive. If he wants to participate in those things, he needs to stay on schedule.
- Interviewer:** So that keeps him on task?

- Respondent III:** Oh yeah and I mean he's getting to the age now where, you know, there are social activities with the other kids in the home schooling group, and if he wants to participate and go to these things, he knows he needs to, you know, stay up to par.
- Interviewer:** Does he have friends outside of the home school network?
- Respondent III:** Yeah, he does. He has a friend that he was friends with from Boy Scouts, when he participated in Boy Scouts, and he has another friend from the Boy's Club, who goes to the local public school, and he keeps very good contact with them. He sees them usually on a weekly or biweekly basis. So, but the other two children, my two middle children are self-motivated. They love learning, they really just work hard, just for the sake of working hard, you know. But my oldest one, he loves to read. If I could make his entire curriculum about reading – He would be thrilled.
- Interviewer:** In terms of methods, do you just use direct instruction? And do you have a time line? You know, do they get up in the morning early? Tell me about your time line and your structure and your methods.
- Respondent III:** Yeah, we are very structured. That's just the type of person that I am. A typical day for us would be getting up at 6:30. I always try and get up at least an hour before them just so I can have my prayer time in the morning, my coffee, and –
- Interviewer:** Wake up?
- Respondent III:** And have a few moments with my husband before he goes to work. So then, I usually get them up around 6:30. They have breakfast and they do their morning chores. They empty the dishwasher, make their beds, fold the laundry, whatever things have to be done. That's a real important part of our family environment -- our home schooling environment, that they are responsible, that they're learning life skills along with academics. So, and then normally we go to 8:00 mass everyday.
- Interviewer:** You drive there?
- Respondent III:** No, it's right by my house, about 10 minutes from my house, so we go to daily mass at 8:00, and we're usually home and back working by 9:00. And then, we work from 9:00 until approximately noon, take a break for lunch, and then usually the two younger ones –

- Interviewer:** How long is your break?
- Respondent III:** About an hour to an hour and a half, depending if it's a nice day out.
- Interviewer:** They go outside then?
- Respondent III:** They go out back. You know, we have a nice big yard, a trampoline, you know, so they get plenty of physical activity. Then usually my two younger ones are finished. If they're working real hard during the morning, they're usually done in that time frame.
- Interviewer:** Everyday?
- Respondent III:** Right, well we do a four-day week, usually.
- Interviewer:** Oh, okay.
- Respondent III:** Then in the afternoon, my older two will finish up whatever work they need to do, and normally they don't – the only things that they usually do at night is extra reading or studying for any tests that I'm planning on giving them – so – What was the other question?
- Interviewer:** Your methods. Is it direct instruction or do they do it on their own?
- Respondent III:** They do a lot of independent, but a lot of math, they need, you know, guidance and instruction. We usually do our religion lessons together as a group, and often times I can combine their English, because I try and schedule the year to being like, adjectives at the same time. Then I just cater each level. Each child is to have a certain assignment that's fit to their level. So, I really tried to do that a lot these last two years because home schooling four at once, at all different grade levels at the same time, it can get hairy sometimes. My husband helps out, not a lot, but he helps out what he can do then.
- Interviewer:** Is he a good instructor?
- Respondent III:** My husband this year is doing geometry with my son a lot. He's a carpenter.
- Interviewer:** Is he totally responsible for the geometry?

- Respondent III:** Well no, not totally, just some you know. It's a way for him to work with him and spend some time.
- Interviewer:** Bonding?
- Respondent III:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Are your behavior standards for the schooling activities different then they are for non-school activity?
- Respondent III:** That's a good question. No, I expect a lot from my kids. I expect them to be respectful and honest and kind to one another. It's really important and I think, you can't separate that from school activities and other activities, you know. Consistency is a big thing with discipline, and I mean, I usually bring them downstairs, we have a classroom all set up, and they're used to that and they do well with that.
- Interviewer:** Is it in the basement?
- Respondent III:** Yeah, it's in the basement, I have a big blackboard, and you know desks and the whole thing.
- Interviewer:** A traditional teacher?
- Respondent III:** Yes. I'm not an unschooler.
- Interviewer:** Is there a difference?
- Respondent III:** Yes. I mean not to say – Usually around Christmas holidays, we bring everything upstairs, and we're a lot more relaxed, or towards the end of the year, like we're getting into that end of the year stage right now.
- Interviewer:** You will go out?
- Respondent III:** Within the next couple of weeks, they'll be doing their work all over the house and you know –
- Interviewer:** How about field trips and other activities or resources, how do they get involved with that?
- Respondent III:** We have like I said our network – it is about 50 families that gather together at any given time. I mean obviously, all 50 don't participate in all the activities, but a good percentage will, we have

usually a monthly field trip to local areas. We have a cranberry bog that we go to and you know, ----- State Park.

Interviewer: . Field trips?

Respondent III: Yes, and you know, different things along those line. And then, we were really blessed to have a monthly music series at a local arts theater in M-----, where it was free.

Interviewer: Oh yeah?

Respondent III: And it was open to all the schools plus home schoolers, so it was a free series.

Interviewer: Is that a change?

Respondent III: Yeah, and it was great because we got monthly, you know, art and musical instruction. One month they had a cellist, another month they had a jazz band, and it was good though. It was very good, and that was on a once a month basis. And, we gather together for religious activities, like a first Friday mass, and then we all go out, you know, we have pizza at one of the homes , and it gives the kids a real opportunity to interact.

Interviewer: And socialize?

Respondent III: Foster their friendships and everything.

Interviewer: How has your relationship with your children changed since you home-schooled, or has it?

Respondent III: It's grown tremendously. A lot of people who have their kids in school, say to me, you know, how can you stand it, being around your kids all the time. It's a definitely a different relationship now, even than it was when they were toddlers before they went into school, because they've matured, and it's a very cooperative relationship, and they know me better than, probably anybody does because we spend so much time together, and I know them. I know their little, you know, idiosyncrasies. A lot of times, when the kids are in school from, they leave the house at 7:30 in the morning, they don't get home sometimes if they have sports until 5-6 at night, and you miss a lot, -- so it's really strengthened those relationships. They're much more responsible because they are a part of the home, they are a part of the running of the family, and it's really integral that they are.

- Interviewer:** Do you have any training in teaching, I mean or are you just modeling your own education, and do you use any outside resources beside your curriculum for, like you know, to get information from that?
- Respondent III:** Well, my professional training is that of a nurse, I'm a registered nurse, and I've worked all through the home schooling up until this previous summer – because of a lot of things, my mother being ill and different things. I've stopped working as of right now, outside the home. So, my professional training is in nursing. That has a definite teacher element to it because we're instructing patients all the time. And, I received the Sacrament of Matrimony, and from there, you're given, you know, the graces to teach and instruct your children simply by the Sacrament. We started instructing them from when they were first born, and it's just to me, it's a natural extension of that and in order to teach them well, coming from love for the child, I find that you can really go a long way with that. And I do have an aunt and uncle, who both have taught in Catholic and public education for about 50 years each.
- Interviewer:** Do you use them as a resource?
- Respondent III:** Definitely. The first couple of years more than ever. I really did because I was teaching my two youngest ones to read and my aunt had been a special education teacher, and they were phenomenal resources, and I still call on them quite often for input.
- Interviewer:** Have you ever considered formal training?
- Respondent III:** What? Going back to school for that? No, no desire whatsoever. Actually, you know it's funny because when I was first growing up and trying to decide what I wanted to do as a career, it was between being a teacher and a nurse – and now I am both. So, it was kind of neat the way the whole thing unfolded in that way. Plus as far as other outside resources, we have, like I said, the curriculum I use. They have basically all day counseling, counselors there for any bumps in the road you might hit.
- Interviewer:** Counseling with the kids?
- Respondent III:** Yeah for both and they've always been very positive.
- Interviewer:** Is it costly?
- Respondent III:** No, it's included in the price of the curriculum.

- Interviewer: Oh, okay. Do you employ technology at all in your instruction?
- Respondent III: Yes. You know, we're hooked up to the Internet, and we have the computer and you know, basically that's it.
- Interviewer: For data, but you don't instruct using the computer at all, do you?
- Respondent III: No, not usually.
- Interviewer: You don't have software programs for Algebra or anything?
- Respondent III: No, haven't found the need for up until this point.
- Interviewer: Do your children enjoy home schooling, or did they ever balk? Were there any problems, or is it mostly a positive experience?
- Respondent III: I think it's been a positive experience. My oldest son was very pleased when we decided to home school, which surprised me.
- Interviewer: Why?
- Respondent III: Why was he pleased or ---?
- Interviewer: Yeah, why was he pleased?
- Respondent III: Because he wasn't happy in school honestly. You know, and relaxed quite a bit when he got home to the point where now he could finally start learning without all the extra baggage that goes on in school, you know, just the peer stuff. And when I first started home schooling, my youngest son, who was at that time age 7 - no, no, no - he was 6, I think when I first started. He swore I was going to home school him through college, so you know, he's been very pleased with it. But no, I can't really think of any, any time that they've ever balked and said I want to go back to school. But like I said, my oldest son does, he wants to go to high school and he's ready, you know he's starting to spread his wings a bit now and I can definitely see that he is ---
- Interviewer: Expanding?
- Respondent III: I just think it -- no actually I think he wants the boy thing, you know, the camaraderie with boys his age. That's why he really loves to be on the boy's club so much.
- Interviewer: Thank you, we're done.

Interview IV

- Interviewer:** Why did you choose to home school?
- Respondent IV:** I chose to home school for a few different reasons. Basically I was tired of the lack of accountability at the school system. I was tired of them wanting to always be cutting edge at my children's expense, offering no continuity to my girl's education.
- Interviewer:** In terms of curriculum?
- Respondent IV:** In terms of — exactly, in terms of curriculum. I was tired of tenure attitude of them visiting out in the hallways, and having the kids teach the kids, you know the 4th grade environment, what did they call that?
- Interviewer:** Cooperative learning.
- Respondent IV:** Cooperative learning — It didn't work.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Do you use a pre-planned curriculum — If so, where did you obtain it from?
- Respondent IV:** What do you mean by pre-planned curriculum?
- Interviewer:** Is it already established or do you decide what to teach in terms of curriculum. How do you decide what to teach, is probably what I'm asking. Is it something bought or do you share with others?
- Respondent IV:** Okay. I attend the New Jersey Home School Curriculum Fair. And there, they have representation from many different companies. And if you have an 8th grader, you might have 20 different curriculum companies that might be present, and all of them will cover basically the same subject matter, but they'll take a different approach. One will be for the auditory learner, one will be for the visual learner, and one will be for the catastatic learner. And what you have to do is decipher how will my children respond to that particular curriculum. I used to when I first started — when my girls were in 2nd and 4th grade, I used Abecca. Abecca is a curriculum that is nationally recognized by a lot of Christian schools. It's very aggressive. The kids who use Abecca math, and Saxton math is probably another math you've heard of, they do very well. They are very strong in those areas. I like the aggressiveness that Abecca uses because I want my kids to go to college.

- Interviewer: Is that what they use?
- Respondent IV: When we first started, they were all using Abecca, and then I switched, and then what I did, was I used a lot of different things. I tried the unit study, because there are only 2 grade levels between my 2 kids, and my younger one likes to be challenged. So, I would you know, try to keep them both similar with what we were studying. But then I tried companies like Alpha Omega, where it was more based out of a workbook. I tried a lot of different things, now I'm back to all Abecca basically. Especially now with high school. I like the textbook. I think that they are going to need that in their future for college. I like the vigorousness, if there is such a word, of the whole scheduling because I think it reflects life, and I want to prepare them for life. I do lesson plans.
- Interviewer: We'll get to that – How do you manage instruction and organize the school day?
- Respondent IV: I do lesson plans. Each of my girls have their own lesson plan book. I have a teacher background and we were always required to do lesson plans. Basically what I do is 2 to 3 weeks at a shot. It take me about 4 hours on a weekend to do the 2 of them, and I have a real good idea of what's coming up. I have lists of what I have to purchase. And then what happens is during the actual school day, the girls work independently, and they follow the lesson plans and they actually mark things off as they do them. I am in the room or in the kitchen. If they need help, I'm there, but they work very, very well independently. The lesson plan book has really organized them – they keep a calendar, all of their different activities through the week are written down so they are not 'Well, mom, what are we doing?' They have full control and full knowledge of what is about to happen during their school week which is really beneficial.
- Interviewer: Yeah. Do you have a structured routine or time for how much content they learn, or the lessons or whatever?
- Respondent IV: Um, Abecca. New Jersey state laws states that we have to school them 180 school days. Most of your curriculum companies are based on 180 school days. So, if you finish the school, you finish the book, you need to finish the book in that school year. Abecca is literally like that in their math. Their lessons are numbered, so if I'm getting close to the end of the school year and I'm not getting done, I know I have to increase it. I don't buy their curriculum; they have curriculum books though, and that you could have it spelled out. We do a lot of hands-on type of things so that there

are field trips. When we do field trips or if we go up to New York for a play, you know – like we're going to Washington this next year, that's a school day. It's considered a hands-on, and I don't take field trips just to take field trips, I mean they relate to what we're doing. So far as the time line –

Interviewer: It's kind of set in the curriculum?

Respondent IV: It's set in the curriculum. We start school at 8:30 every morning. My kids have chores. They get up at a certain time. They have chores every morning and we start school by 8:30. And when they're done – they're done.

Interviewer: How do you assure effective utilization of the learning time?

Respondent IV: The girls are required to follow their lesson plans to the tee. A lot of the classes we cover have tests and quizzes they have to do everyday.

Interviewer: Abecca gives you those?

Respondent IV: Yes. I require book reports. We are involved with co-ops where they are required. They've been doing it for 4 years now – oral presentations. So that, you know, they're not intimidated by being in a group setting.

Interviewer: How do you make educational decisions about what and when to teach a determined content area?

Respondent IV: Like I said before, in educating myself about what the curriculum companies do at the curriculum fairs, everybody has basically the same things in the different topics – so do I stray from it? Sometimes I stray from it.

Interviewer: Why?

Respondent IV: To see if there is a real interest. I guess that's where the unschooling has come in. But I try not to do a whole lot of that because they finish so early in the school day that there is plenty of time for them to do that on their own time. I need to be able to justify the continuity of what we're covering --- and it's a building block.

Interviewer: You get them started and then let them go on their own?

Respondent IV: Right.

- Interviewer:** In your curriculum planning, do you employ technology?
- Respondent IV:** Absolutely. Because that's their future. They work on the computer every single day. I have two computers; we have a printer, a fax machine, and a copier. They are on-line, they are doing keyboarding and typing, they are interacting using the World Wide Web. I involve it in their teaching. We did a dissection with a small co-op a couple of years ago and one of the things that was part of it, was instead of dissecting the frog, they did it on-line – which was just a different flavor. L ----, my oldest daughter, also uses the videos because she has bypassed me in math, so everyday she uses a video instruction and when she is just unsure of what she's learned, she can rewind it, play it back, and it works really well. She is carrying a really high average in her math and I think that it --- She went from wanting to be a lawyer to a math teacher, so I think that you know, it made a big impression. This math instructor is very good.
- Interviewer:** Okay. What type of instruction do you employ? Is it like the one to one instruction, a classroom setting, which would be direct – you mentioned some computerization – but how do you instruct the content?
- Respondent IV:** It used to be one on one. When the girls were really young when we first started this, I would do math with one and then one would be doing something else that really didn't need my help, except to get started. We would save the real important subjects where they really needed me hovering, but now they are very independent. We work incredibly well in co-ops. Where they are in small class environments with other kids, not necessarily their peers.
- Interviewer:** Networks? Networking?
- Respondent IV:** Yes. For instance, for their schedule this next year, they're doing a 2 hour Biology lab on Mondays, American Government for 2 hours on Tuesdays, Art on Wednesdays, and they're doing a Mom-and-Daughter Bible study on Thursdays. That is instructional time, where the moms can co-op, can share teaching in areas that we might be weak in – but because we're without peers, it keeps us accountable. If I have to do a teaching on dissection of the worm and I'm really uncomfortable with that, but I know that I'm not only going to be teaching to the children, I'm going to teaching to my peers, I'm going to go beyond the call of duty to research and be prepared for that co-op on Monday. So, I really think co-ops have really benefited my environment with my children.

- Interviewer:** Can you explain the co-op instruction?
- Respondent IV:** A co-op is for me is an environment of study that I'm weak in — that I will be held accountable for because I'm not only going to share teaching to a few other kids, but their moms will be there too. It's not a drop-off environment. Do you want me to explain about the world geography?
- Interviewer:** Yes. Explain how often and —
- Respondent IV:** Okay. Last year, we did world geography, which was at the high school level. We had 4th graders on up to 11th graders. There were about 11 girls there, and we met for 4 hours every Wednesday, packed a lunch, and had lunch together. And what would happen is — let's say we did Europe. I might have to teach about the animals found in Europe, and I'd have a big map and I'd have all these different animals that I gave out the week before to the girls and they all came, researched the animals, and they're giving a short oral presentation on those animals and where they're found. And then we go to the big map, and what happens is, there is a lot of interaction. There is an excitement because if I was still here at home and I was teaching on a subject I wasn't really comfortable with, I might not go that extra mile, but because I know that 2 of my really good friends, who I spend so much time with now, they're going to be there and they're going to be listening, I'm going to go that extra mile. It's peer pressure, big time. (Laughter). But, it's not very advantageous, you know.
- Interviewer:** Do you have expected goals or outcome for instruction? Do you have goals? I mean what are the outcomes, what are your goals for instruction?
- Respondent IV:** Learning. I can never teach my girls everything that they need to learn. Learning is a process that is life long. And that if I can develop a love for learning with them now, then I've accomplished my goal. The outcomes, beside understanding that they're in a process their whole life of learning, and when they don't understand something, they can go — and this is where they can go to research it, that they can communicate with all different kinds of environments, that not just in a school environment with only their peers, or to show compassion and empathy for other people. They're experiencing life. Can I elaborate a little bit?
- Interviewer:** Yes.

Respondent IV: Four years ago, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I had a mastectomy and I had to go through chemo and radiation, and God was really faithful. A year after that, I had ovarian cancer and I had to have a hysterectomy. Through both of those terrible times, my girls saw people reaching out to our family to where I didn't have to cook for five weeks. For five weeks, somebody was always here bringing my family dinner and providing for my family, and they learned that you, when you can show empathy, that the friendships, that the people – that there is a depth, that's not superficial. We live in a society, I believe, where we don't take the time to get to know other people and my girls missed one day of school the whole time and I just think that's a miracle. I mean, there were so many small miracles, and having them home, I think that it would have been so traumatic to send them off to school, wondering if mommy was going to be okay that day.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent IV: So, expected goals and outcomes for instruction, there's just so many because they're experiencing life. When L----- was in 8th grade, 2 years ago, she really wanted to go back to school. She made life very, very difficult here. And one day I just said, "You know what, let's go." She replied, "Well, where are you going?" I told her, "Well, I am taking you back to school." "You're taking me back to school?" she replied. I told her "Yes, got your coat, we're going." So I put everything in the car and we went to school.

Interviewer: Was it _____ school?

Respondent IV: No, she was still here at _____. I walked into the office with her and I said I'm here to re-enroll L-----, and they said okay and told me that the principal would be right with us. I was sitting there and I'm waiting and I'm thinking, you know what, they don't like us, and they're going to want to test her and they're going to want to do all this stuff that's just going to spin our wheels, and I just need her to get back into the groove and to continue this flow that we've already started. So I said to L-----, "I'll be right back." I came home and I got all my lesson plan books and I got all of her books for that particular school year. In the back of each of my lesson plan books, I keep reading lists of what they do for pleasure and for required reading. I keep lists of field trips because I'm brain dead any more, and I want to remember where we've been from year to year. I want to remember what places that we go see in Philadelphia or up in New York, and why we're taking what we're doing, the extracurricular activities – well anyway, back to

what happened. I took everything back to school, and she was already in the principal's office. So I walked in and I said Mrs. K - "How are you doing?" She said "I'm doing really good, this is interesting Mrs. xxxxx", and I said well, you know what I thought, I'd better bring some books in and show you what she's been doing. So I laid everything out in front of her desk and showed her all of the different things that L----- had been doing and she leaned back in her big chair and she kind of took a deep breath. She looked at L----- and then she looked at me and then she looked back at L----- and she said, "L-----, I can't compete with this." She said, "you are experiencing life. You're going to have to get used to just being contained in these 4 walls and that's not life. So are you sure you want to do this?" Well, she lasted 5 weeks. She just didn't bring any books home. It was a big social time. Her history teacher at that point, they were doing the Constitution, and he was giving the test, and he said, "let's see how the home schooler fairs against the public schooler." Well, it was just too appalling. And she asked to come home and I said to her, "you can come home, I welcome you with open arms, but we can't go back and forth. If you're going to come home, you're going to stay" ----

Interviewer:

How do you provide learning opportunities?

Respondent IV:

Learning opportunities are mainly field trips. We do field trips based on what we're learning. When the girls were learning, we did a lot more field trips, but now my daughter just finished her first year in high school, and time I feel is very precious. She wants to go to college, so when we take field trips, like with this American Government curriculum, what we're going to be doing right before Christmas is going to Washington DC for three days. And then, we have some ties with the Home School Legal Defense Association down in Virginia, and there's a man down in Washington, who is trying very hard. R---- S-----, he's trying to get the ten commandments as a standard, for the government not to be afraid to stand on the ten commandments and we're tying in with him. He'll be introducing kids to different representatives in the House and the Senate. We also have some connections up in Trenton, so we're going to actually be following bills through, so that they can walk though with the bill and see it first had. I think that seeing the process first hand and being hands on, it will be more meaningful then just reading about it. So, they're going to be reading about it, and they're going to actually be doing it, and my girls, especially my young daughter is a hands-on learner, she's a kinesthetic learner, I think by knowing those learning styles, it kind of ----

- Interviewer: It comes from their interests.
- Respondent IV: Yeah, it gives you that incentive.
- Interviewer: How is feedback and reinforcement for instructional concepts accomplished? Do you give them feedback or reinforcement?
- Respondent IV: Yes, I do. My older daughter loves elephants and my younger daughter loves manatees, so I went out and I bought stamps having to do with that subject matter, and I give them report cards, because they work – they came out of the public school system. I always write on their report comments, because I want it in writing for them. We, then have a portfolio that they're compiling, just in case the colleges are going to ask for it. If they are doing essay writing or you know, I try to make learning fun so when they see my enthusiasm about what we're doing, they can get excited and I think that gives them the feedback to encourage them to do what they're doing. I think that's why we give feedback. I think the grades, they can go back in my lesson plan book, and I have a whole section on just grades, so they can, if I haven't tallied things up, they know they can add them all up and divide by the number of grades there and they can get their average.
- Interviewer: What is your environment like – the environment during your teacher-student interactions?
- Respondent IV: The environment of the student teacher interactions? I have a schoolroom. In the wintertime, we have a wood stove in our living room, so sometimes we'll come here and we'll just snuggle. We have a glass area, the fire will be going, and we'll lay on pillow and do some reading if it has to be done. Or they'll come out here and do some math, but basically – well L---- does her math here because of the television and the VCR, but basically everything is confined to the schoolroom. It's an area where there are resources. It's an area that they know that they have expectations. I'm there. We also run, we have our own business, so I'm there doing that also. The phone might be ringing, but you know, they've learned that they need to be blocking things out, as part of life --- that's all part of life.
- Interviewer: Is there a difference in your behavior standards for school activities?
- Respondent IV: No. (Laughter). No, we have a chore list on the side of the refrigerator, and I expect the chores to be done, and they sometimes say "Mommy, we're your maids." But I have my name

on that also, the chore list, so that they can see that if we're going to take field trips and if we're going to do all of these extracurricular activities after they've done their schooling, which requires afternoons for me, then I need them to help maintain order in my home. I can't be in the schoolroom with the beds not made. So my tone of voice and the process that I have on the way that my home is run, is the same with the school. Does that make sense?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Interview V

Interviewer: Why did you choose to home school?

Respondent V: I chose to home school because I really wanted my children to have – I wanted them to have a better education, but I wouldn't say that that would be the first thing. I would say that the first thing would be that I wanted them to develop more of a parent dependency rather than a peer dependency, and I wanted them to just enjoy home life rather than enjoy being around 30 other kids the same age, 8 hours a day.

Interviewer: Peer pressure?

Respondent V: Exactly. I've really learned that, we used to say we would do it, we would analyze every year and then decide if we're going to do it for the following year, but I noticed after having 5 children, I noticed that with each child being born, they all got to enjoy each baby. They didn't come home and say "oh, this is my mother's baby and that's my mom's responsibility." They really got to be very close to the baby.

Interviewer: Home schooling made them closer?

Respondent V: Yes. I really think so.

Interviewer: Do you use a pre-planned curriculum? If you do, where did you obtain it?

Respondent V: I do use a pre-planned curriculum. I use Calvert – the Calvert Curriculum, which is from the Calvert Institute in Baltimore. I learned about it through – a curriculum guide first led me to it, and then I talked to a field of people who had used it before. It goes K through 8th grade, and it has everything that I need all in one big box. It's a private school. Actually you pay for tuition. That's how they designate it, so you really, you're not supposed to re-sell your books or anything like that. This year, I'm actually implementing a little bit of freedom, they're using something called a consultant, which I also talked to somebody else that was using it, and was having fun. Two of my daughters love to read, so we're learning what goes along with the Little House book and it's a unit study. So, what we're doing this September, we're going to do a little bit of classroom timing, and we're using Calvert for our base, so we're kind of doing a little bit more than normal this year. I just wanted to have some kind of fun stuff going along with it.

- Interviewer: How do you manage instruction and organize the school day?
- Respondent V: Actually, we keep a very scheduled routine kind of day. We start out usually at 8 in the morning after breakfast; I usually have everybody dressed. We go until our lesson is complete, and that might mean that we might go until noon, or it might mean that we go until 2. It just depends on finishing our entire lesson because Calvert goes by lesson 1, 2, and three, so in other words, we wouldn't just like, open the math book and say okay, next page, we would just go by, according to what the teacher's manual does. Yes, by lesson, and I would say that if they don't get it, we either go back to it on the same day or sometimes we start out with what they didn't get that day before and then we start the next lesson.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Respondent V: So, we manage instruction in that way.
- Interviewer: Yes, and organizing the school day?
- Respondent V: Organizing the school day? We usually have a set schedule and a set routine when we start school.
- Interviewer: Okay. What time do you start?
- Respondent V: We usually start by 8. We usually finish – I would say that we finish by 12, but there are days when we finish at 1 or 2.
- Interviewer: In the afternoon?
- Respondent V: Yes. It might even be later.
- Interviewer: Do you have a structured time line for the year, or scope and sequence, or routine that you keep?
- Respondent V: I keep the NJ standards of 180 days of school. We have gone over. I don't think that we have gone under yet. Because of the way that Calvert schools uses their curriculum, its 160 lessons, plus 20 lessons of reviews or tests. There are 20 tests to take and after we – I'm sorry there are 8 tests to take. But it's every 20 lessons; so after 20 lessons, we do a review and it adds up to 180 days. So completing Calvert plus doing any extra activities we do, like we ski in the winter, so that's a whole day gone, and we don't school on the way up or back or anything like that. That's 6 weeks, so we do that once a week for 6 weeks and that takes away 6 days.

- Interviewer: Of the year?
- Respondent V: And then we do field trips. We don't school on field trip days, so we usually go around 190 days I would say.
- Interviewer: How do you assure effective utilization of learning time?
- Respondent V: That's a hard one. I try and make it so that everything we do is a learning activity. Could you repeat the question?
- Interviewer: How do you assure effective utilization of learning time?
- Respondent V: I make sure that every time when we begin school, we are only doing school. I'm not on the phone, I'm not talking to friends – every once in a while, I'm doing the dishes if they have snack time, but it's school time and strictly school time and we keep that – and the children know that too. We do chore time before school and we do chore time over the course of the day. It's strictly school time when we're working. And when the baby comes in or when my preschooler comes in - I hand them something to do. We would when N---- was a baby or a smaller baby, I would alternate his activities. We would start out in the high chair, we would go to the exerciser, and we would go back in to the high chair. He would nurse, he would be on the floor playing with his blocks, I would do that, I do that even with him now being a toddler. He'll be alternating --- the children are used to being somewhat distracted, but not completely distracted.
- Interviewer: So they stay on target?
- Respondent V: They do stay on target, they do very well like that, and they're used to it.
- Interviewer: They are?
- Respondent V: They have to be.
- Interviewer: How do you make educational decisions about what and when to teach a determined content area?
- Respondent V: Well, since I use Calvert; the Calvert Curriculum – Calvert goes exactly with second grade and whatever you're supposed to be teaching for second grade is all in there, and they would cover from beginning to end of what a second grader would need to know.

- Interviewer: Okay.
- Respondent V: I haven't really had to go any further with, they need to know this and it didn't cover it. Calvert is very thorough in that area. With each grade level, I don't really have to add anything if I don't want to.
- Interviewer: If you don't want to?
- Respondent V: If I don't want to.
- Interviewer: Do you ever add anything?
- Respondent V: Well, this year we're doing the Little House –
- Interviewer: Little House on the Prairie?
- Respondent V: The Little House, yeah, actually Calvert has a Little House guide, but it's not as thorough as this one. The other one that I was going to use – the Abecca primer this year – we can go off on a tangent if we want to.
- Interviewer: Oh.
- Respondent V: So, we're going to do our base with Calvert and then we're going to go off on a tangent when we want to.
- Interviewer: You do vary?
- Respondent V: Yeah, we can go study bears because Laura Ingalls Wilder had bears come past her house when they first built the house in the little woods and things like that. We can go off on that and they were enjoying doing that. I feel like I am kind of combining – We'll I am going to do this primer with the girls.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Respondent V: My son is in the 6th grade, so he'll be doing directly on his own. The 6th grade Calvert is geared toward the student. The teacher's manual I wouldn't necessarily have to look at, he can just look at it, he knows exactly what he has to do and it teaches him his lessons. It will tell him how to learn a new concept, and if he has questions, I can go back over it with him, and I do always do that. He's been –
- Interviewer: Independent?

- Respondent V:** Yeah. He's very independent and he's been like that actually with Calvert since the 3rd grade. He's been able to look at what I highlight and do what he needs to do, and then I do teaching time, you know later on with him.
- Interviewer:** In your curriculum planning and instruction, do you employ technology at all?
- Respondent V:** We do use the computer. We do have CD-ROM's; Calvert uses CD-ROM's for their spelling and vocabulary and for grammar. They also use -- we use CD-ROM's for a couple of enrichment programs like 'King Arthur and His Knights' and 'A Child's History of the World' is also on CD-ROM and we use those. My younger daughter used the Calvert reading enrichment program and that's on video. Its called 'Come Read with Me,' and we used that. She really got a lot from that and even my preschooler sat down with her and started playing with the puppets and stuff like that. They made puppets to go along with the reading.
- Interviewer:** They make puppets?
- Respondent V:** Yes, to go along with the sounds and stuff like that, so she goes to sit down with that. Otherwise we don't do that unless it goes along with my curriculum, I don't use anything else besides it.
- Interviewer:** Do you use the World Wide Web or Internet or anything?
- Respondent V:** No, I usually don't. I haven't yet. I'm kind of computer illiterate myself, and Internet illiterate. My son's probably better at it than I am.
- Interviewer:** What kind of instruction do you employ?
- Respondent V:** I use it, on a one-on-one basis. I usually work with -- I start out with my oldest, my son, and I go over what his lessons are for that day, and if there is anything he has questions on, he can come back to me as he's working. I go from oldest to youngest. The youngest, I usually will start her on something that she can do on her own, while I'm working with the older one, then the middle one, but I would say one-on-one more than anything else.
- Interviewer:** They get different assignments?
- Respondent V:** Yes. Sometimes I can put Z----- on the computer to do his spelling -- while if he has a question on something that he can't

answer, he can go on to do something that he doesn't need me at all for, and then I can work with one of the younger –

Interviewer: You work directly with them?

Respondent V: One of the younger girls – Right.

Interviewer: Do you have expected goals or outcomes for instruction?

Respondent V: I do expect them to be able to complete all of their work at each grade level and understand what they do, but I also want to be able to go back and say, at the end of the year, not just did they do well in their tests, because even though Calvert does testing and we do the tests, we don't send them in to the center – there is an advisory teaching services that you can sponsor or pay for, and we don't do that because I felt like it was too much pressure on them to get the grade. We don't – I don't think the most important thing is the grade. I think the important things that they have enjoyed is what they learned and that they learned it.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent V: I may not stay very strict with them ... Do you remember what the date was of, except for 1776 or something like that, they don't have to know each and every detail because they had to know it for the test. But if they know the different sequences of history or the different concepts in Math, and as long as they learn it and we make sure by the end of the lesson that they've accomplished and they understand what they're doing so that when they go to the next concept or the next sequence, or the next timeline, they have an understanding beforehand. It's not just – okay here's the lesson. Lesson 1 is complete; lesson 2 ----- you can be a slave to your curriculum and that's not good either, so I try and be a little bit lenient in that area, but making sure that they have attained and learned what they're supposed to have learned.

Interviewer: How do you provide for learning opportunities?

Respondent V: Learning opportunities? In life or anything? Well, our next door neighbor had, they had turkey vultures outside and we got our book out and there was like 5 of them all around. This one area and they were gross – it seemed like; we have a lot of fun with birds though they are not – we haven't learned anything. That's been really fun. Our neighbor had a woodpecker outside that was living in their tree, which was right next to their car, and we got out the book and we learned which kind of woodpecker it was

because we found there are several different types of woodpeckers – it was a regular red headed woodpecker, but he had, he kept banging into their window of their car, like he was trying to get in, it was a tinted window, so he didn't understand. We thought what's wrong with this bird and we ended up calling an animal control. We told them about this bird, and they couldn't find him when they came. But they said keep watching and it was good. Probably 3 weeks that he was here in the tree and banging his head.

Interviewer: How is reinforcement and instructional concepts accomplished?

Respondent V: Calvert school uses every 20 lessons, we then have a review day and then they have a test. Some days it might take us 2 or 3 days to go through the review and it might take 2 days to go through the test, but what we end up doing is whatever we've gotten wrong on the test, we go back and review back again to see what it was that they got wrong. We use open book format – just to go back and correct it. We correct it together. Most of the time we correct the tests together and the reviews are very, very thorough. In fact, I think they take too long.

Interviewer: How often?

Respondent V: They are structured reviews for every 20 lessons. What there isn't though – what do they call it -- a midterm. There is not like what you've learned all the first part of the year, there is nothing like that. It's just every 20 lessons – but what Calvert does within it's curriculum – it may not exactly be in a textbook, but within it's curriculum, it goes – it might review a certain concept from the beginning or state fact that you can look back at this and it tell you which lesson to refer back to remind you.

Interviewer: If you miss the item, it will tell you?

Respondent V: No, but as you go, as you're going through I notice that, why I've used it; I've used it grades 1 through 5 so far, so we've used it for 3 years in a row. We've used other things in the past. But what I really liked was if it came up to something that let's say it was a part of science that we might have learned at the beginning of the school year, but I'd refer back to it; it will tell you – you can look back at Chapter 2 in the science book. Chapter 2, part 3 to review this concept because it might coordinate with this, or the student might understand it better if you remind him about this. I can't think of a specific off of the top of my head, but I remember doing a couple of things like that, and it does that in grammar a lot too.

- Interviewer: Oh, really?
- Respondent V: Yeah.
- Interviewer: What is the environment during the teacher-student interactions?
- Respondent V: The environment is pretty much a life in the house of a large family, because we're coordinating a toddler and preschooler —last year a baby and a preschooler, there are distractions. We try and keep the phone off, so the phone doesn't ring too much, but Daddy might be coming in now and then, to stop in between jobs and stuff like that, and they might take a break here and there. I would just say it's pretty much a life, regular day in the life of a family.
- Interviewer: Even though it's structured?
- Respondent V: Even though it's structured.
- Interviewer: And where does that take place?
- Respondent V: We work at the table.
- Interviewer: At the kitchen table?
- Respondent V: Yes, the kitchen table, and dining room table. And our books are in the our cabinet and they know where everything is and everything is in their own category.
- Interviewer: Is there a difference in your behavior standards for school activities?
- Respondent V: No, there are no standards. I do expect certain behavior during school time as much as I expect certain behavior in normal time. They are supposed to be polite. They are supposed to answer the phone politely, they are not supposed to raise their hand or anything like that, but they are supposed to say excuse me if they need to interrupt me if I'm working with somebody else, which they don't always do. But they don't always do it normally either, and I have to admit, I probably interrupt too. That's probably the worst thing that can happen during a school day beside maybe I don't think we've ever had — we've never had a problem with like—I don't want to do it or anything like that, but I just do expect their attention just as much as I expect it on off times.
- Interviewer: How are expectations set and do you utilize any rewards or incentives?

- Respondent V:** Expectations –
- Interviewer:** Do you tell them what you expect from them or does the curriculum do it for you?
- Respondent V:** The curriculum does what I expect them to learn yes. It tells me that.
- Interviewer:** Do you tell them I expect you to do this today?
- Respondent V:** Yes, I do. Z----- is 11, he doesn't enjoy composition and you have 3 to 5 compositions a week between 4th and 5th grade. It started out in 4th grade with 8 to 10 sentences and it works its way up to 5 paragraphs. He doesn't really like that. He's a science kid and he would rather be manipulating electrons and protons and explaining how they work, rather than creative writing. I do expect him to do them though, I tell him if doesn't like it; I don't mind changing it. If he wants, if I can get 5 paragraphs out of him and they are decent paragraphs and nicely written, not only in form, but in grammar and penmanship – or any of those areas, then if he wants to write something on science instead of what he did at the store, then that's fine.
- Interviewer:** He can choose the topic?
- Respondent V:** Yes. I don't mind.
- Interviewer:** You don't give any money or rewards?
- Respondent V:** No, since there are no grades, I mean, I know what their grades are, but only because their friend says I got an A in this, and they understand what that means now.
- Interviewer:** You don't give them pizza parties or anything like that?
- Respondent V:** No, I don't do that. The beginning of the school year, or the summer time, we've done some of those reading programs, where if you read 10 books, you get a free happy meal. We've done things like that, but it's not part of our curriculum.
- Interviewer:** Not part of yours?
- Respondent V:** No, and we don't do that with the younger ones. I do stickers now an then or I put a stamp on that says good job – they like that kind of thing.

- Interviewer: Once in a while?
- Respondent V: Once in a while, but not on a regular basis. I haven't done it before on a regular basis.
- Interviewer: How do maintain interest in self-initiation for the student?
- Respondent V: I believe that, we usually try and find something in each day that they're going to enjoy doing, like S---- enjoys reading. So a lot of what we do might be focused around what she's just read. It might be focused around just something she's doing for the day and stuff like that – I don't know if that really says anything – maintaining interest, plus our regular activities like watching the birds outside and stuff like that. I mean, they are more interest in birds than I would ever expect a normal child to be like. A bird flew by, big deal, you know, we'll watch birds in our bird feeder just to see the different types of birds that we have. I think we maintain a lot of interest that way, and they have too. Calvert advises that they do half an hour of reading a day, the older children an hour of reading a day – so Z----- might be reading his How Things Work book and S----- would be reading, Little House on the Prairie, or the Baker Street Kids or something like that – so they do a lot of reading during the day.
- Interviewer: They like to read.
- Respondent V: For what they like, yes. And we try to do library time and they can check out books or whatever they want.
- Interviewer: When they get bored and you want to stop, how do you keep them going?
- Respondent V: How do I keep them going? (Laughter). We have to complete it, it's just what we do. That's life, you know, we have to do school.
- Interviewer: Okay. How do you know when a lesson is learned and what determines your decision to move ahead?
- Respondent V: How do I know when a lesson is learned? Well, the review helps us a lot with what we've learned, and they will usually tell me if they don't understand something. Almost always, when we do a lesson, they start out part of the lesson, and then they do work book. They have workbook time, and the work book time might be what they've already learned or what they've just learned – like math. They've just learned a new concept, they've learned

fractions, dividing fractions or something like that and that's what it will be a part of that lesson – so if they're not getting it ---

Interviewer: You'll know?

Respondent V: Yes, I'll know. Science is a little bit tricky. I noticed that there are things they may understand, and may not understand and more by reading or more by getting different books out of the library on that same topic – that helps.

Interviewer: Supports the curriculum?

Respondent V: Right, it really does.

Interviewer: What assessment models are used in terms of monitoring progress?

Respondent V: Calvert, like we said before – Calvert uses a review every 20 lessons. Actually there is a review at 5 lessons with a couple of different subjects, but there is a major review every 20 lessons. There are smaller reviews in between the lessons. Grammar is reviewed and spelling is reviewed every 5 lessons and at the 20th lesson, right before the first, right before each test, there is the major review. That would cover everything learned over the course of the 20 lessons, and I think I stated before that it might take 2 or 3 days to go through just the review.

Interviewer: Have you had any training or do you seek resource support for your instruction?

Respondent V: I have not had any training. I haven't had any training at all for like teaching, but I have support from my relatives.

Interviewer: How have they helped?

Respondent V: My brother-in-law and my sister are both public school teachers and they've influenced me a lot on how much I do, or how much I may not do, because I think there are people out there that may not "cover everything." I think in the beginning they thought I may have been one of those people. I use them a lot for support. I've had problems with word problems in math in the 4th grade and 5th grade that I've had to call my sister about. She is a math teacher. And I've trusted my brother-in-law to put together several lessons already over the course of the 7 years we've been home schooling. Eight years we've been home schooling, he's done several different science shows or science classes for our home school group. And he'd put them together. Some of them have been

weeks, like 6 weeks or 8 weeks, some of them have been a 2-part thing. He's taught all different things and the kids really enjoyed it because they've gotten to do their labs, their lab work that way, and he's blown up a couple of flasks and they've enjoyed a lot of what makes this kind of smoke and why is this color and doing some chemistry etc.

Interviewer: Volcanoes?

Respondent V: We've done volcanoes, we've done volcanoes a lot on our own, but we've done a lot of different chemical reaction things and he's really helped them along in that way, and they've enjoyed it too.

Interviewer: Have you had any other training or been involved with groups or anything?

Respondent V: Well, we do have a support group. We have a support group with 80 plus families in it, and we utilize co-ops and stuff like that from time to time. Over the last 2 years though, I haven't done anything.

Interviewer: No trips?

Respondent V: No, because I was pregnant the first year and I was really very tired and very sick. And in the second year, he was a newborn and I didn't know how much I could handle of running around and it was enough. I was the activity and field trip coordinator for the younger children, ages 10 and under, so we were doing enough running around that I felt like being a part of something that was on a weekly basis or a biweekly basis was more than I could handle. Doing the field trips and the regular activities were plenty, and I felt like they were getting what they needed.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interview VI

Interviewer: Why did you choose to home school?

Respondent VI: I chose to home school my children shortly after my first child was born. Having had him at a birth center, breast-feeding and just trying to do everything I could to do what was best for my child, I started researching home schooling as an option. Just not wanting to go along with the general public, if you will, and made a decision to investigate home schooling. I wanted to be a good steward of my blessing. I felt that God had blessed me with this incredible human being and I wanted to do what was best and to be a good steward of him. And after investigating home schooling, I was determined that it would be the best decision for him and for me and my family. Another very important reason is that I'm a Christian and I didn't want my son to have to leave his Jesus home everyday. I wanted him to carry his Jesus right along with him and be able to speak and pray. I wanted him to be able to have comfort and nurturing, and I felt this would be the best way to do it.

Interviewer: Do you use a pre-planned curriculum? If you do, where did you obtain it?

Respondent VI: I would have to say yes and no to that. As far as a curriculum, this is our 4th year teaching. He will be starting 4th grade and our second son will be starting kindergarten. I found that each year I learn. It's a learning process for myself and in the beginning, I would start with a pre-planned curriculum, which I would obtain through a Christian home schooling company. Over the years, I've learned to loosen up.

Interviewer: What is the name of that?

Respondent VI: 'Ann Ward: Learning at Home' – a wonderful curriculum. I will be using that again this year with my son, who will be in kindergarten. But, as my son has gotten older, I've learned what his strengths and weaknesses are, what he likes to learn, and what he doesn't like to learn. But things he needs or likes to learn by book and what he likes to learn by manipulative or just the world itself, and I've learned to loosen up, and when my son wants to learn about the ocean, I've learned to get myself to the library and get books on this and be creative, and even doing art about the ocean. Let's not get some blue paper and do mosaic of the ocean. So I would have to say that I use both pre-planned curriculum. As I said, my first son did use Ann Ward in his first year, my second will just be starting with that. A----- is starting 4th grade this

year, and will be using a combination of Abecca for several subjects. His reading materials will be coming from Sunlight and of course as I said, some free spirited things from Mom.

Interviewer: Do you have a catalog when you order the curriculum?

Respondent VI: Yes. I order Abecca through Abecca, which recently just had a curriculum fair which was held in Runnemede, New Jersey. I went and had the opportunity to preview all their materials and make decisions along with other moms who home school, was able to look at their previous lessons or booklet that they used from the past and this helps you to make your decision as what may work for you and your children. So, there is a network. You can call and you can say is anyone using Saxton Math, is anyone using Abecca History 4th grade level, I would like to preview it.

Interviewer: Is this through the company?

Respondent VI: No, this is through a home school support that we're members of -- which is about 65 families. Then just from other mom support or information what they like and didn't like and then going to Abecca and looking first hand. The same thing with Sunlight. Sunlight can be ordered by the Sunlight Company. They are located in Colorado. They will send you a brochure. You look at their information, you make some decisions. What I like about the pre-planned curriculums from most companies is that you have the ability to mix and match. My son, A-----, is advanced and I can buy him spelling at the 10th grade level if I need to, and then I can buy him his Math at the 4th grade level. I can buy his sciences at a 9th grade level, and if I needed his creative writing at a 3rd grade level, I would have the ability to do that. So as a mother, I do enjoy that.

Interviewer: Is there flexibility?

Respondent VI: I like the flexibility.

Interviewer: How do you manage instruction? How do you organize the school day?

Respondent VI: We manage our day -- Right after our mealtime, we go right in to what we would call our Bible time. Bible time can take place usually -- maybe not right in the schoolroom. It will happen usually somewhere on a bed, a couch or even in front of the fire in the winter months. That will take us approximately 5 minutes. We will do Bible stories that are age appropriate. We will talk about

them. There will be discussion time. After our Bible time, and then during our Bible time, after we've actually been in the word and done memory verse, then the children will – we have a notebook, and in this notebook we keep a list of people that we would like to pray for. People call us with prayer requests and they go on our request list. A----- the older one, is in charge of keeping note of that. And then there is another sheet, which is our praise notebook, and anyone who gets off the prayer list and the answer goes to praise is on the praise list. So we'll then give praises as well. We normally take turns each day. A----- will either during prayer read the prayer request list, and then I will do the praise. The following day, vice versa. The children are able to see first hand that God is at work in their life. They get to see prayers answered and it's really wonderful. So that's how we start our day. That's about a five-minute period. Immediately after that, we will start school – actual bookwork if you will. Do I lay it out that we do math first, then history, then science, no. I'm not legalistic in that respect. I will try and say – maybe we need to work on our spelling, or let's work on cursive first. And then move along –

Interviewer: How do you decide to move along?

Respondent VI: I make that decision and we do cover all the subjects, not each day. There may be a day that we're spending a little more time on an art project or a science project and that's fine. We will then perhaps spend extra time the following day on let's say a spelling lesson or a math lesson. But the main subjects or math are hit each day. Reading – he's a reading fanatic, so I don't even worry about that. He's always reading. But the school day will probably end there. There will be a snack at one point – we'll have a break for a snack and then we go back to school and we finish up the day around 1:00.

Interviewer: Do you have a structured routine or time line?

Respondent VI: We do not school throughout the year as many home schoolers do. They school right through all 12 months. We school from September till about the second week in June – sometimes the first week in June.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Respondent VI: I would have to say it's for me personally – I need a break. (Laughter). Some moms like to do it year round, because it's such a commitment and a responsibility. Perhaps the children would

fall into a norm of doing it, but for myself personally, I would like a little break myself. I like the children to enjoy the lake and it just not be a field trip in the summer to go to the lake. I'd like this to be more of the norm. School will get our full, allotted amount of school work done because in the winter of course, there are days that it's snowy and it's cold and we'll spend extra days because the children just want to continue working. So it's a pajama day as we call it. We will stay in our pajamas and we will just stop for meals and we just have a ball doing nothing but school. We'll be doing a science project at 7pm because that's what we want to do. So, we definitely get our allotted schoolwork in. But as far as a structured routine, normally it would run, as I said September through June. We're done about 1:00 or 1:30 because we do stop and take a break. Our snack break is about a half-hour. If we've baked bread in the morning, than that might be at 10:30 for the bread to be done. We want to have our bread and honey and our tea – and laugh and talk, and just enjoy that time. There are days we don't stop for a snack because we have a co-op. Co-ops are of course when we get together with 30 or 40 other families to do something collectively, be that a science co-op, a physical education co-op, an art class, a karate class, or several other things, like swim lessons at the local college. So there are days that of course we don't have pajama days because we have made a commitment to some other scheduled event.

Interviewer: How do you assure effective utilization of the learning time?

Respondent VI: Well, I have to think about this. I hope that I'm being effective in the way we use our time. I try and pick up instinctively as a mother what ways my children like to learn. I try and be creative in the way I teach them. For example, we do the pilgrims each year. We will even go in an upper or inner room in the house and pull the shade, and bring candles and act as if we are pilgrims in England, hiding from King James' men and that we need to pray. We need to read the Bible, and we're not able to do this freely, so we will actually role-play this. We'll try to do a meal, even if we get the book done before Thanksgiving, which we usually do. We'll actually do a Sunday meal, trying to do it as if it were the Thanksgiving meal right along with the popcorn. My son insists that we have popcorn because they had popcorn. So I try and be effective. I say in using this time in just reading to my children, and I think as a mother's instinct, I can determine what is best and how they like to learn – and that's how I think I'm best utilizing the learning time.

Interviewer: The learning time?

Respondent VI: Learning time, yes.

Interviewer: How do you make educational decisions about what and when to teach a determined content area?

Respondent VI: I'll start by saying that I try not to go by what the state or the government says my child should know at a certain age. I try and make educational decisions on what to learn and base it on what their interest is. And not totally. I do, of course, I try and keep up with the math for example. I will try and go along with scopes that you'll read. If I look at Abecca or I look at Sunlight, I look and see what's being taught at that grade level. I can also look at perhaps one of the encyclopedia companies or several, and you can see a scope on what generally children are learning across that age or at that grade level. So I do use those, I would say a loose guide. More so, I think I make decisions based on their wants and their needs. My older child, of course I'm talking about him – the younger one is just starting. My older child was reading before the age of 5 and that was not because I taught him. I would have to say that was a blessing from God. I just always took him to the library every week like we still do, and he just has a love for books, reading, and he has the ability to retain what he reads, so for me to be getting books at his age level would just be the same as if I were to put him in a private or public school setting at his age level, and I think it would just be such a terrible waste for this child. So even though at some things, like his Math, he might be doing at his 4th grade level – as he's going into the age level, but there is no way he would survive the spelling or the reading or even the science or just the knowledge, social studies information. He is much beyond that, I have to keep that in mind. We don't discuss with him an age or grade level in what he learns. He just knows that he's learning and that is the way we handle that.

Interviewer: In your curriculum planning, do you employ technology?

Respondent VI: I have to make sure I understand this – do I use computers or a VCR?

Interviewer: Anything.

Respondent VI: Many of the curriculums that are available do have many sources, such as videotape and audiotape for some of their learning. As far as we as a family, because again, he's just starting 4th grade, we have only used the computer. But I don't use it. He's not

permitted to use it without myself or his father sitting right next to him.

Interviewer: You monitor it?

Respondent VI: We may do our geography, we'll look at some geography areas together.

Interviewer: He can use it alone?

Respondent VI: Yes, but I have to first access this without him, and then make sure it's a safe site. I'm not very trusting of the Internet. He does not know how to go onto the computer – go online—if you will. He's not permitted to. He, of course, has computer games. We do buy, say a math skills computer game or a science kind of fun activities or games. He'll get these for Christmas, and they do love them and we do let them use them. But as far as going on-line to research something, this would be something normally that I would not let him fall into a web site that just because of a push of a button, may be the wrong key, and then he would see something I wouldn't be happy with. As far as any other lessons that are available by video, but no, we don't use them. The teaching comes from me. I guess this would be part of technology. We do frequent the library on a weekly basis, and we do get books on tape. We also get their slide machine out, they still have slide projectors at the library, and we buy little slides and we put the cassette on. We make popcorn, the whole bit. So, most of those are more for pleasure though. They do have slides that are of say, plant life or animal life, and we do get those. But, most of the time, it's just so they know these resources are available to them, but they do love books on tape and they do love a filmstrip here and there.

Interviewer: What type of instruction do you employ?

Respondent VI: I would think we use a little bit of everything or very little on computer as we just spoke of with technology. Very little time is spent on computer. I would have to say that's because of my fear of worldly thing that are on the computer, and I don't believe that children should be exposed to that. Television is something that we do not use in our home, with the exception of once a week, our children are able to watch a family movie with us or a children's movie. But other than that, maybe Discovery Channel, but we would have to then tape it for them to see.

Interviewer: Do you preview it?

Respondent VI: Yes, we would. My husband would first. We are definitely not your norm as far as the television or computer family. Some of the computer issues may be just concerns I have of it's worldliness, just like television, and I probably need to loosen up a little, because I believe the computer could be utilized a little bit more as he gets older. But, we're gonna work on that. And as far as direct teaching – direct teaching is done with my children, perhaps when we are doing Bible time collectively, or a science activity in the kitchen together. Of course, I'm talking to both of them, even though the one is younger, explaining and letting them both take turns. We're all doing this together, baking things of this nature, we're doing collectively or direct teaching as you will. Of course, we have our normal one on one as well, and that would be in his bookwork or their need to spend time. The younger one will be directed to do perhaps a play or do a watercolor, or whatever he feels like doing, while I spend some time with A----- one-on-one working with him. Reading I would also say we do collectively or as you are calling direct, where we may take turns reading a page, and then talking about the answers, but even the younger one will participate in that way. So, I think we utilize all three with the least being the computerized.

Interviewer: Do you have expected goals or outcomes for instruction?

Respondent VI: That's a good question. I – my expected goals are that my children will be children who love and adore their heavenly father, that they will know and understand that everything in this world that we have, from our home to what they see when they walk in the woods is from God – that it is a gift from God. I hope they will become children who will be able to grow up to understand differences, and help their community, and you know, take the blessings, the gifts God gave them. As I said, A----- is an exceptional reader and learner, and I hope that he'll be able to take these things and do God's work with them, whatever his – whatever God's plan. I hope they will be able to reach these goals and that they'd be able to be good citizens and good people. Good in the sense of good little Christians. We hope that we're instilling in them character building traits, such as respect of property, respect of authority, these things that perhaps are somewhat lost in today's world. I would think these are more important to my husband and I in our home school journey than perhaps subjects learned.

Interviewer: How do you provide learning opportunities?

Respondent VI: Every way possible. (Laughter). Brushing teeth, there's a lesson in it. When we get up in the morning, if we're going to do breakfast, we have a junior chef program here, where you know, mom's cooking and the junior chef gets to assist from whipping the egg to measuring out the flour. Every opportunity you could imagine. When we go grocery shopping, a calculator comes along and we try to see if we can keep track of our total, even though it's frustrating for an 8-year-old at times, when he loses the number, but we do learn this. We say, here's the budget, let's go with the calculator. So learning opportunities just in life that I think some children maybe lacking because they're in the school for these many hours. I try not to take for granted when I'm driving down the road at 1 or 2 in the afternoon to the library that my children can be told what the road signs mean, what their license plate means, be it a handicapped plate, what would be a violation of parking in a handicapped place to what kind of violation it would be just to mankind and what God would think of this. Every opportunity. I'm teased of how much I'm constantly teaching them, just everything -- the common things. I would have to say that most of our teaching -- a large majority of our teaching happens when we're in the car or when we're walking or we're just together. Not just in the classroom setting.

Interviewer: How is feedback and reinforcement for instructional concepts accomplished?

Respondent VI: I would say that that the way we handle reinforcement is just a lot of review. If it's a lesson that I believe they would need more than that one lesson, we would just review that. We don't have a set or established time that a lesson must be mastered in. I'm not looking for mastery on many things at his age, just the exposure of perhaps a subject would be at this primary level for him. So, I don't look for mastery, but I can tell when it's time to move on. Not by testing always -- no. Just by knowing that he's gained what we have, what we've learned.

Interviewer: Does he tell you?

Respondent VI: Yes, and we try and reinforce things I would think by other avenues. If we are learning about a particular subject, I will try and make it fun through mealtime or through an art lesson, or we'll go get music based on this. T---- recently just read about Mozart, so we would then make sure we listened to Mozart that whole week during breakfast time. Then we would play other music to see if we could identify the differences between the other classical artists. Could he determine -- fun with it like that. And of course,

just going to the library and getting other CD's on Mozart music, that's again, with a story line. There is one that's just for children -- children's classics. So he could hear a story and just imagine himself living back then and knowing Mozart. So, I would say our reinforcement is just by taking it other ways, through art, music, or even a meal. A field trip -- Field trips are very large for us. So, those ways reinforce something, but I don't necessarily believe they have to master it and just his excitement is my -- his feedback, him talking about it -- what's the word, me hearing him speak about it to someone else or even sometime making a similar comparison of something. That's recently just like we learned in this lesson, this reminds me of, it's the same type of thing. Then I know that it's sinking in and he's understanding it and then we can move on. But, I do not set a guideline. We have to be done with this lesson in 2 weeks. If it's not mastered or where I need it to be, we need to move on. No. We're pretty flexible with those areas.

Interviewer: What is the environment during teacher student interactions?

Respondent VI: We live in the home in the woods and our children will learn sometimes on our side porch if it's a beautiful day, with the chimney burning and hot chocolate. They will learn on a very cold winter day in front of the fireplace as we put blankets down and we have a pajama day with the fire going. We do have a classroom. We have been blessed with a large enough home that we have the ability to make one room for a classroom, so we spend a lot of time there as well, and of course the world that God gave us is our largest classroom, from field trips to co-ops and home school soccer practice or karate or swim lessons. So I would say the environment is the entire world, but at home here with me, it could be on my bed snuggled reading and it could be in a classroom with me just standing behind them trying to encourage them through a lesson. So, quite a large scope of interaction. Lots of hugs, lots of kisses, lots of nurturing -- which I feel very blessed that I can do that with my children throughout the day when they're struggling. I can hug them. I can almost want to strangle them as well, but for the most part, I don't take for granted that if they're struggling that I can say, you know what, put the pencil down, let's go snuggle, let's go hug, let's go have a snack, we'll come back to this. I don't take that for granted. I believe it's a blessing for the children and for myself.

Interviewer: Is there a difference in your behavior standards for school activity?

Respondent VI: No, not at all. We have a standard, we live by the book, by the Bible, and I believe it's God's rules for how I should be a parent

and handle being a good steward of my children. The word tells me, you know, how to train my children so that they will go right and I just live by that 24-7. I don't differentiate during class time that there is a different standard. I would like my children to feel that their school time doesn't end at 1 or 1:30 on a regular school day, that we've just always be together as a family and learning together, so no, we don't have a different standard.

Interviewer: How are expectations set and do you use any incentives or rewards?

Respondent VI: I know a lot of families do large incentives and rewards. We don't necessarily. I have an entire box of stamps and those stamps say anything from beary, it has a bear on it, and it says 'Beary Good Job' to 'You're Terrific', to 'Try Harder,' to 'Neat Work' with a little nice notebook printed on it. Just tons of pads and they love when I take that box out and they get to pick what color stamp pad, and I say okay, this is very neat work, let's get the neat work stamp sticker out and put it on. They love this. They are also rewarded when we put the things on the refrigerator or we display them in the house. They are very pleased by this. This seems to be enough. And just praise -- lots of praise, lots of hugs, lots of kisses, lots of contact. We have lots of physical contact with each other, and I hope this will help them in life also to be nurturing and loving to their wives and their children and to people in the community. And so, lots of affection -- but beyond that, no, they don't get to go to Zany Brainy's once a week, and they don't get to go to Pizza Hut, because you know, they got their spelling words right. We just keep it a little simpler in today's world.

Interviewer: How do you maintain interest and self-initiation?

Respondent VI: I think that lots of trips to the library, letting them learn what they want to learn. Say like dinosaurs -- following their lead.

Interviewer: How do you know when a lesson is learned and what determines your decision to move ahead?

Respondent VI: I am not looking for mastery at this level, but constant reinforcement leads me to believe that they learn and seem interested.

Interviewer: What assessment models are used?

Respondent VI: I use Iowa tests at the end of the year in second and third grades, and he was off the charts.

Interviewer: Have you had any training or do you seek resource support for your instruction?

Respondent VI: No training, but support from collaboratives and the companies from which I purchase the curriculum materials.

Interview VII

- Interviewer: Why did you choose to home school?
- Respondent VII: I decided to home school --- I first thought about it when my first son, N----- was born. Even when he was a baby, because I had read articles about it in magazines, like Mothering Magazine and different literature, and I decided I wanted a more organic learning environment for my child.
- Interviewer: Did you know anybody that home schooled?
- Respondent VII: Yeah, I had met a few people who had home schooled. It's funny. If there had been a Waldorf school in the area, I might have gone that route. I was very keen on Waldorf schools. I investigated how involved it would be to open one, but anyway -- I decided to home school.
- Interviewer: Do you use a pre-planned curriculum? If so, where did you obtain it from? How much does it cost?
- Respondent VII: I piece my curriculum together. I use Sackson Math and Sackson Phonics for a real comprehensive curriculum. I don't always use the script that is provided, but it was helpful in the early days to have something structured like that in math where I felt weak and in phonics, which I felt should be kind of extensive. As far as the other subjects go, I piece it together with unit studies. I use catalogs, Internet, and I ask the advice of other home schoolers.
- Interviewer: Does it cost you a lot of money -- the Sackson?
- Respondent VII: I wouldn't say a lot of money. I guess, for all the books and manipulatives that I use, and workbooks -- maybe \$150 or \$175 for the year.
- Interviewer: A kit?
- Respondent VII: Yes.
- Interviewer: Does that include lesson plans?
- Respondent VII: Lesson plans -- yes.
- Interviewer: Everything is preset?

- Respondent VII:** Preset for the math and the phonics. There are other programs that are Christian or Catholic based that cover every subject, but I didn't want to go that route. I didn't want to replace – I wanted to develop my own philosophy and not have just a pre-planned curriculum.
- Interviewer:** Do you have a structured daily routine or a time line for your instruction?
- Respondent VII:** Yes. We meet at the dining room table at 9:00. The kids have to – my, 10 year old and 7 year old have to be ready to start work. So if they wake up at 6, they may play or they may make breakfast, or whatever, but 9:00 is when we do, I guess my structured work. We do that usually, it depends. If we have a morning activity, I mean if there is a concert, we'll go to the concert and flip-flop.
- Interviewer:** And flip-flop?
- Respondent VII:** And do the work in the afternoon or maybe skip the work that day. But in general, we work I'd say from 9 to 12 with a break in between, because they are very active and ---
- Interviewer:** And the afternoons are open-ended?
- Respondent VII:** The afternoon is more when we meet with other home schoolers, or go to the library, or go swimming, or take an art class or do drumming lessons.
- Interviewer:** OK.
- Respondent VII:** The out of the house stuff.
- Interviewer:** How do you assure utilization of learning time – how do you keep them on task, etc.?
- Respondent VII:** That's a big challenge. That is one of my big challenges for this year is self-discipline because ideally what I would like is that the boys would just accomplish –
- Interviewer:** Do they self-initiate?
- Respondent VII:** Self-initiate? Yes. But I don't really use rewards, its not fair, but I guess I do impose – oh, what's the word I am trying to say – like I restrict things if they don't do their work.
- Interviewer:** Like an external structure you have?

- Respondent VII:** Yes --
- Interviewer:** So there are consequences if they don't finish their work?
- Respondent VII:** Yes, there are consequences. For example, if the math lesson isn't finished, then their friends won't be invited over to play in the afternoon. They'll have to finish their math before that happens.
- Interviewer:** How do you make educational decisions about what and when to teach a determined content area?
- Respondent VII:** A couple of things here. I kind of watch when my kids are ready, when they start asking questions about things, and I go in that direction, and I can usually tell when to get more technical and when not to.
- Interviewer:** Do you do that intuitively?
- Respondent VII:** Intuitively, yes.
- Interviewer:** What do you do when they stop getting curious?
- Respondent VII:** Right. I would say more intuition, and -- but another thing I'm very aware of, which I'm not always pleased with, but I also mimic the school sometimes. I'll hear what other children are learning in school and I'll feel a responsibility -- I'll hear a 5th grade neighbor talk about government and I'll think -- oh, I haven't taught them the 3 branches of government, I better go with that. So the school curriculum is still --
- Interviewer:** Like an overriding influence?
- Respondent VII:** It's still around. It is definitely an influence. I wouldn't say that it's overriding, but it's an influence.
- Interviewer:** In your curriculum planning, do you employ any technology or instruction?
- Respondent VII:** Yes -- CD's, computer, the Internet, computer programs.
- Interviewer:** Videos?
- Respondent VII:** We don't have videos, we don't have a TV, but I'm thinking about using that for some documentaries.
- Interviewer:** DVD? None of that?

- Respondent VII:** No, no DVD.
- Interviewer:** No computerized instruction? Last time, I think you said you were going to have videos as instruction as they get older.
- Respondent VII:** Right. As they get older, some videos for – especially for documentaries and – as they get older, I think I'll get more involved with an exchange through e-mail and the Internet. I've talked to people who have had successful math lessons through the Internet and that's a possibility.
- Interviewer:** You mean purchase them?
- Respondent VII:** When they're older –
- Interviewer:** You mean purchase a course on-line?
- Respondent VII:** Yes. I imagine that in the future, but not right now. Now it's more supplementary stuff, instead of having a set of encyclopedias, we use you know, CDs.
- Interviewer:** Collier's?
- Respondent VII:** Collier's, right. Although we do have an encyclopedia technology, which they just like leafing through, and it's funny how old things still win.
- Interviewer:** Oh really?
- Respondent VII:** I remember loving looking through encyclopedias and the kids like that physical stuff.
- Interviewer:** Touching stuff?
- Respondent VII:** Our biggest resource is the library – the public library. The librarian is great, she is very helpful.
- Interviewer:** How often do you go there?
- Respondent VII:** A couple of times a week. I send my 10-year-old alone to find things. We use the meeting room; we use programs there. It's a great resource.
- Interviewer:** What type of instruction do you use? One to one? Computerized, you said you're going to move there, but do you do group instruction with your children – individual, one-to-one, what is it?

- Respondent VII:** Mostly, one-to-one, and I believe in that tutorial. I'll alternate with them. I'll give the older child independent work, then I'll tutor the younger one – then I'll give him independent work and then tutor the older child. Occasionally, I do group activities with other home schoolers, but that's more – it's not subject, it's more workshops.
- Interviewer:** Do you give them a lesson at a time or do you plan the whole day and they know what they're expected to do?
- Respondent VII:** I've done it both ways. I do a lesson at a time, when, if they're really understanding some scientific concept, we'll just flow with that lesson and I'll forget my plan for the days. But usually, I have a list of things to accomplish that I write out for them. If they can do it independently, great. More often, I have to start with them.
- Interviewer:** Do they choose anything to do for the day? Do they have any input?
- Respondent VII:** Their input is more in the afternoon. I have the morning structured. Although I may have a morning writing and activity assignment – and they'll have a choice whether to do it on the computer or hand write it – and often the subject matter.
- Interviewer:** Oh really?
- Respondent VII:** I've also given them choices on whether to extend a writing project or whether to keep it to one day.
- Interviewer:** Do you – you said before that you had an overriding curriculum in your mind from the public school, but do you have expected goals or outcomes for instruction?
- Respondent VII:** I try not to because I think the expectation kind of leads you to – it limits you, because then once you hear that key word, you go up, they got it – that's it. I'm trying to avoid that, I'm trying to see it as a continuum, where the unexpected comes out of the lesson, and a continuation, and an opening up.
- Interviewer:** In a box?
- Respondent VII:** I don't want a box. I don't want a set outcome. Occasionally, I fall into the trap and this comes from my history of public school, that you know, has conditioned me. I'll be thrilled when they write a nice, sweet, concise paragraph, and I'll think, wow, this is great.

But I have to say I'm more fascinated sometimes when the paragraph may not be perfect, but it has some interesting ideas in it.

Interviewer: Creativity?

Respondent VII: Or maybe – especially with my little one, who doesn't write that much yet, when he gets frustrated with words and will draw something, that's not an expected outcome, but it's still wonderful.

Interviewer: How do you provide learning opportunities?

Respondent VII: Museums and travel are the big ones. Mentors – that's a fancy big word, but I try to find people with expertise to interest my children and to ask questions I can't – or just people with expertise.

Interviewer: Co-op with other home school families?

Respondent VII: I haven't. I've avoided big coops. I do social things with other home schoolers and we do workshops together. I try not – I don't want to create a new school which a lot of the co-ops seem to be with, and once again, they don't seem cooperative. There usually seems to be a leader who --

Interviewer: What is the organizational structure?

Respondent VII: A strong person who imposes – not imposes, that's not the word, that's too strong. There seems to be someone or one ideology that's strong in the co-op.

Interviewer: And everybody follows along?

Respondent VII: Yeah, that's what I find.

Interviewer: So, they are really replicating public schooling?

Respondent VII: Yes.

Interviewer: Instead of really home schooling?

Respondent VII: Or creating a little mini private school.

Interviewer: How is feedback and reinforcement for instructional concepts accomplished?

Respondent VII: Oh, I need you to repeat that one.

- Interviewer:** How is feedback and reinforcement – how do you reinforce them and give them feedback, so that they –
- Respondent VII:** This is a little funny because I really don't like stickers or smiles or any of that. Just this week, my 5th grader said to me, "Just in case I go to school some day, I think you should be giving me a letter grade so I know where I stand." And I said – once again this lead to something I didn't expect, and we had a discussion about if he went back to school and why he would want to go back to school – which he doesn't want to a this time. He just wants to know what if.
- Interviewer:** There's a safety net.
- Respondent VII:** He just wants to know what will happen, what will that mean. But usually I would say, I don't do that type of feedback. I talk about what they feel comfortable with, what they don't understand, it's one-on-one so you can be more verbal.
- Interviewer:** More verbal?
- Respondent VII:** More verbal – right. Although, I also, just get them to communicate more with writing. We have been writing notes back and forth.
- Interviewer:** So written feedback?
- Respondent VII:** A little written feedback on the papers.
- Interviewer:** What is the environment during student and teacher interaction? Or do you set aside room – you said the dining room, but are there other places?
- Respondent VII:** I've done it all different ways and find, I don't want to make an artificial classroom. I find a change from our home, we clear off the table – we start, but it's still in the home, but there is an atmosphere of change. We don't pick up the telephone for example. We let the answering machine get phone calls for the morning and that's a rule.
- Interviewer:** Do you create an environment of silence?
- Respondent VII:** Yes. Although, I would have to say, I think our best learning is usually happening in chaos. When I observe things, when I have a bunch of children over and not — not a structured, not the math, but I'm much looser in the unit studies. I don't impose order when

we're doing a science experiment or when we're talking about history. I impose order when we're doing phonics, math, and the organized curriculum material.

Interviewer: Is there a difference in your behavior standards for school activities?

Respondent VII: No, I would say not. It's continuation of life.

Interviewer: Do you just set up the structure differently?

Respondent VII: Right.

Interviewer: But the behavior doesn't change?

Respondent VII: Right. They're still allowed to chew gum. When they're studying sometimes, they drink tea.

Interviewer: How are expectations set and do you utilize any incentives? I know you don't give rewards, but what about incentives?

Respondent VII: Yeah, I think there are incentives. When they hit a certain expertise with something, I say we can continue onto another level where we use more physical world and do it more seriously. And, that's a motivator.

Interviewer: Is it?

Respondent VII: Yes. For example, it's one thing the way we started learning about robots was getting a book out of the library, and then we moved onto writing reports and Internet searches. Then it moved onto workshop at the local community college, and now the next step will be –

Interviewer: Community college?

Respondent VII: Maybe we can do some work with them. We've done the kit – which they weren't very satisfied with. So now the next step might be to do more technical applications.

Interviewer: How do you maintain interest in self-initiation for your children in studying?

Respondent VII: I try to bombard them with a variety of – what's the word – instead of one type of book, different attitudes and different environments – different approaches. Meaning if, when they were very little,

they read these magic tree house books and then from there, they started to get involved with an on-line discussion with the author.

Interviewer: On-line?

Respondent VII: Yes – to approach the book from different sides.

Interviewer: How do you know when a lesson is learned and what determines your decision to move ahead?

Respondent VII: Intuition. I guess I never feel anything is learned. That's probably my basic philosophy, is that there is always more room for improvement and that nothing – even when you're in advanced studies, it's simplifies questions, just more layers are stripped off of those simple questions.

Interviewer: Simple questions or do you go deeper?

Respondent VII: Right – intuitively too. I know when someone knows their timetables or not. Some of those things are more tangible.

Interviewer: Tangible?

Respondent VII: I have a sense and the things that are intangible, we just continue with.

Interviewer: But you don't ever feel uneasy that they are not learning?

Respondent VII: No, like I don't have a list of facts. We've covered the Revolutionary War, but covered it for what grade level, perhaps not. There are some areas I forgot. I've taken them to sites. I would never feel it was done until they saw the sites.

Interviewer: Do you use any testing or assessment models in terms of monitoring progress?

Respondent VII: No, it's pretty much intuition. I think that as they get older, I will seek out more models. I know there are some books I've seen in home schooling catalogs about assessment that I will probably use at some point -- not have them state tested, but have them take some practice tests, so they know what it's like.

Interviewer: Practice tests?

Respondent VII: Yeah, like SAT type tests, so in case –

- Interviewer:** Sort of like an experience, but you're not going to use it to see where they are?
- Respondent VII:** No, no, no. If I was a public educator, I would be much more comfortable with portfolio assessment. I don't do anything like that. But, I guess I just look at them all. But actually, that wouldn't be a bad idea to do an objective.
- Interviewer:** Objective?
- Respondent VII:** You know, I am very rarely the only teacher. I'm always the mother, but maybe at the end of the year, an objective portfolio assessment would be in order. I look to my husband a lot because he's not involved with the day to day learning as much. When I was very frustrated about eldest son not reading, he told me, he's reading so much better. He could gauge better.
- Interviewer:** He helps?
- Respondent VII:** Either way, and not day to day.
- Interviewer:** Sort of like we don't see our kids grow and other people see that.
- Respondent VII:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Have you had any educational training or do you seek resource support for your instruction?
- Respondent VII:** I have a college degree and I talk to other home schoolers. I use the library –
- Interviewer:** But, you never had any educational courses?
- Respondent VII:** No, no educational courses.
- Interviewer:** You never went to school to get trained?
- Respondent VII:** No.
- Interviewer:** Just home schooler training sessions?
- Respondent VII:** No, no workshops yet. I've gone to conferences and had good ideas, but I haven't really had a training.
- Interviewer:** Thank you.

Interview VIII

Interviewer: Why did you choose to home school?

Respondent VIII: Well, last year, and actually throughout the years, we found, especially with my son that the school day began to dominate. We found that homework would take a significant amount of time, from the time he got home from school, which was late because of the long bus ride, until bedtime. Naturally, with projects we want him to pass and do well, but we naturally didn't place a lot of value in some of them. In some, of course, we did, but as we found there was no time for him to explore any of his interests, and he's a very interested child. He has varied interests. He is a lot like my husband, which was really interesting – the books they like to read are similar and things – but they could never really pursue or do those types of things.

Interviewer: Because they didn't have the time?

Respondent VIII: They didn't have the time because there was a lot of homework – a lot of things that were required from school. Now in our family, we placed a lot of value on education. My husband and I both went to college and we really – I really enjoyed school and I know that my son did, but we felt that there were other things that were losing out – other things that we felt were important for our family and important for him. And spending all of his time, from the time, he got home from school to bedtime working on all of this – and you know, if we had someplace else to go, we had to fit it in or just do it quickly. I thought if I'm spending this time with him, I can do this during the day, and he's going to be able to then have that time to, if there's an interesting thing in history or science, then we can pursue it more. My husband, since he's so much like my son, has interests – they have similar interests, but they could then, have more time to pursue those things.

Interviewer: Is it structured?

Respondent VIII: Well, no. He does have the flexibility where he can. So the main part of school is me, but Tuesdays and Fridays, when I work, those are his days to do the school. I will set the day up.

Interviewer: So you chose to home school because of the time constraints and the flexibility?

Respondent VIII: Time, flexibility and that he could pursue those interests. He could do the reading, he loves history, he loves science, and we could

plan our lesson around that. You know, those areas he's interested, that he could learn more about.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent VIII: And those thing we felt were important. We found that there are some, I don't believe that, at least up until 4th grade anyhow – I am not sure 5th grade and beyond, I don't think they teach history in school at all. It's social studies, which there is a lot of value in some of that, but a lot of it is community things and he loves history. So now, we're now teaching him history and we're not really worrying about the social studies aspect of it. So we were about to do that and my husband loves history so this is really exciting for him, so he's organizing the history part of -- that is his area. So they are able to work on those things together and plan it out. They get this time together they never had before because of schedules – he was busy during the day and during the evenings – so I guess that would be it.

Interviewer: Do you use a pre-planned curriculum? If you do, where did you obtain it from?

Respondent VIII: We use Abecca curriculum and we obtained it through Abecca. A few times a year, they'll come to hotel meetings – and we went to the hotel meeting. We had previewed things on the Internet, but we did go to this hotel meeting to actually see the books.

Interviewer: How did you find out about the hotel meeting?

Respondent VIII: On the Internet. I found out about Abecca and I went to their web site and I found that they had a hotel meeting – and they are really the only ones who do that. So we did go to look at the books and we have friends who are also using it, and Atlantic Christian School uses it. We have friends who are there and they're happy with it. So we've had some recommendations for that more than others and that's really why we chose it.

Interviewer: So you looked at it and you liked it?

Respondent VIII: Yes.

Interviewer: What did you like about it?

Respondent VIII: Well, we liked that it's very – I guess similar to what they would do in a school setting. We like that organization just because that's just where we come from. You know, we haven't really pursued

those other types of education, like we've heard about the classical education and the different curriculums that deal with those, but we don't know anything about it – our background is not education. So this is where we felt comfortable and that is what made us happy about it – and the fact that it's user friendly. The teacher's manuals, it's really curriculum made for a Christian school setting, but you take it home and use it as a home schooling. But it's really geared for a Christian schoolteacher. They do lay everything out for you. It's very clear, every day, each lesson plan.

Interviewer: In grade levels?

Respondent VIII: Yeah, all in grade levels. Although you can switch around like with history. They are flexible, but not as much as others. I found a lot of other curriculums had a little more flexibility than they did, which that may be the one negative part about it. Not that it's negative, because we want a little flexibility in the history area, so we choose not to use History from Abecca.

Interviewer: How much is the curriculum?

Respondent VIII: How much? I think it is around \$60 or \$75.

Interviewer: For every year?

Respondent VIII: For a year's curriculum, inclusive. So for history, my husband has really made that up himself. We did get books from a different home schooling curriculum company called Sunlight, but it's more of a resource book that they use. It's a whole series of books – thirteen books, and he really liked that. We were able to preview that at Border's and so he's drawing out of that and making up the quizzes and tests himself. So, it's mostly Abecca with the history done by my husband.

Interviewer: How do you manage instruction and organize the school day?

Respondent VIII: Well, my son is the oldest and I have a daughter who is eight, and another daughter who is six. So the eight-year-old and the six-year-old still go to public school, so everyone wakes up at the same time, including my son, who is being home schooled. We get up and everything has to be done at a certain time in order to get my daughter on the bus. My other daughter is in afternoon kindergarten. So he has to go right along with the whole schedule. As soon as she gets on the bus, school starts. Now, when we first did the schedule that the curriculum had recommended – how much time it should take for each thing – we found that it didn't

work for us. It took a lot longer than the curriculum said it was going to take.

Interviewer: Why?

Respondent VIII: I think because my son is a little bit of a daydreamer, so it takes him longer to finish things. And I'm not sure that I -- maybe this was just the time for instruction and he was supposed to spend the time later, but it was taking longer, and I felt like I was just constantly jumping from one thing to the next just to fit it in. I don't think I was effectively giving him the opportunity to learn. So we decided to do kind of a block scheduling like the high school is considering. What we're doing is -- we doubled up. We'll do two lessons of language arts in one day. The next day, we won't do language arts, and instead we'll do two of science. We do math every day because math just takes longer itself and so rather than doubling on that, we do math every day. We'll double up on the other subjects and do those every other day. Then I feel you're continuing learning something about verbs and language arts, you'll still learning it, but it's something that is similar to the subject of the day before, and you can do them both in the same day. You're not spending time reviewing what you've done and I think it's more efficient for time. I feel more organized with that.

Interviewer: So you feel better?

Respondent VIII: I feel better about it. I still feel like it's hard to accomplish everything in a whole day.

Interviewer: Do you have a structured routine or time line during the day?

Respondent VIII: Yes.

Interviewer: A strict routine?

Respondent VIII: Not real structured as far as the time. I give him the time that, except for math because math sometimes will take a little longer because of his daydreams. So, I do have to say, you get an hour and that's it, and you'll have to finish it later. For the other things, it's really as long as it takes. If it takes him that long to do it and understand it, he gets that much time, and then if I then, if I'm not around or if he's with my husband, then he knows what he needs to finish while I'm not there since I've organized it and set it up for him.

- Interviewer:** Do you go over that in the morning and then when you're not there he has to continue?
- Respondent VIII:** Right, so he knows what he has to accomplish. He has an assignment book that he has to follow along to hopefully get him to be more independent and get things done. So he has a lot of independent work he has, but I still spend quite a bit of the time with him sitting and doing things to make sure that he understands. So it's mostly mornings I'm with him and in the afternoon, he's a little more independent.
- Interviewer:** Independent. How do you assure effective utilization of learning time?
- Respondent VIII:** Well, I guess I have no other choice because with my one daughter in afternoon kindergarten and the other daughter getting on the bus, it automatically starts the day at a certain time. We automatically have to stop and he has to have a certain amount done by lunch. So, because of what's happening with them and because of my work schedule.
- Interviewer:** So the routine is set?
- Respondent VIII:** The routine is set. With other things going on in our life, he knows that he has to be finished by a certain time tonight because we're not going to be home tonight and he can't finish it up then. So, it's really I think the business of our lives dictate a lot of the time management.
- Interviewer:** How do you make educational decisions about what and when to teach a determined content area?
- Respondent VIII:** Well, the curriculum – I follow the lesson plan and what the lesson plan calls for that day. I'm pretty much structured with what they tell me to do and that's what I'm going to do.
- Interviewer:** You don't stray?
- Respondent VIII:** My husband will stray with the history – and science, sometimes we will stray, like if it's something interesting, we will go a little bit off on that. But I still try to keep up with what lesson plan we're doing, so I don't get too behind, and we have strayed with the reading some. They tell you what reading to do, what biographies they want you to read, but we don't necessarily want to do those biographies. We're allowing him to choose what the

reading is with us. So we have strayed some, and it's in our interests, and maybe what's learning in history will determine that.

- Interviewer:** In your curriculum planning, do you employ technology?
- Respondent VIII:** Not a lot. We would like to do more. It's probably because my own ineptness with the computer – but he did have to do projects and he had to type out words, enlarge them to put on a poster. And we did go to the Internet to look up information about a science project that he was doing and printed out pictures he could put on the poster for that. So we've done the Internet, although I end up doing it because I'm at this point not excited about him being on the Internet. I get him set up, and find it, and then he can go from there and he can look once he gets to the site.
- Interviewer:** So you kind of set it up?
- Respondent VIII:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** How about videos?
- Respondent VIII:** Well, we actually did one time. We were learning about bees and we did have video that was related to that.
- Interviewer:** Instructional videos?
- Respondent VIII:** No, just videos.
- Interviewer:** How about TV? The Discovery Channel?
- Respondent VIII:** He does on his own, but nothing that has been related to our curriculum.
- Interviewer:** What type of instruction do you employ?
- Respondent VIII:** Pretty much we're one-on-one. We sit down and go over the lesson for the day. We go over all the examples. We do some trial and error with things and then does the work independently with me close by to answer questions.
- Interviewer:** That's about it?
- Respondent VIII:** That's about it.
- Interviewer:** Do you have expected goals or outcomes for instruction?

- Respondent VIII:** I would like him to learn it effectively. Now they have tests that come with the curriculum, and I find that I would love him to get an A+ on all of the tests, but it's also telling me that I haven't done something that has taught him correctly. Like today, he had a language arts test before I left, and there were couple of things that he just did wrong. I think it's because he wasn't clear on it and then that would be something I need to review again. So, I want him to know it. I would love him to get a great grade on the test, but the test is also just telling me, you know what he hasn't picked up on.
- Interviewer:** But, how do you know when he gets a good grade on that assessment?
- Respondent VIII:** I guess I don't know that because I'm following the curriculum.
- Interviewer:** Oh, OK.
- Respondent VIII:** I found that when I study with him that he does very well. When I go over things and I don't study from the test – I don't even look at the test – we go over the chapter, we go over all the concepts, and make sure that he knows them right before. I guess, that's one of the things I'm struggling with now, but I am just training him to take a test. Is he learning to know it and to be able to apply what he's learned or am I teaching him to take a test?
- Interviewer:** How do you provide learning opportunities?
- Respondent VIII:** Well, we did a field trip as it related to history. We went to historic Philadelphia. And with science, there will be experiments. So, one afternoon a week, he goes to the library and he does the research on something of his interests or related to something we're learning in science or usually history.
- Interviewer:** But you don't go in groups to study?
- Respondent VIII:** No, I haven't gotten involved in any networks and probably the reason for that is that it would just add to the busyness of the day. It would take away from the time that I'm with him and that we're working on things.
- Interviewer:** Is that why you chose to home school?
- Respondent VIII:** Yeah and I think it would sort of defeat the purpose.

- Interviewer:** How is feedback and reinforcement for instructional concepts accomplished? How do you reinforce and give him feedback?
- Respondent VIII:** Well for positive reinforcement or for something we're excited about, maybe we'll spend more time getting a book at the library to learn about that. If he's done well and he likes it, when the negative part, when he needs negative reinforcement, when he's daydreaming – I tell him to pay attention. So I guess just being on top of him.
- Interviewer:** But you don't give stickers or anything like that?
- Respondent VIII:** No.
- Interviewer:** Activities?
- Respondent VIII:** Well, if he gets everything accomplished in a certain amount of time, then he has free time. It's up to him. Sometimes it takes him way too long and we want him to have free time sometimes. He's not getting it on those days when he's daydreaming more. It's not getting accomplished – he still needs to accomplish it. So if he gets done and it's done correctly, he's got time to do what he wants to do.
- Interviewer:** So that's the reinforcement?
- Respondent VIII:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** What is the environment during teacher-student interactions? Like where are you or what's the environment like? Is it relaxing or is it more structured?
- Respondent VIII:** It's very relaxed. Normally, he's in the kitchen sitting at the counter and I'm with him – that way I can know what's happening with my kindergartner. Or he's in our computer room, which is at a desk – which is pretty far from the kitchen – it's pretty relaxed, but I'm always close by. And it's quiet too. It's not a lot of activity going on.
- Interviewer:** Is there a difference in your behavior standards for school activities?
- Respondent VIII:** School activities, meaning things he's doing for me for school?
- Interviewer:** Right. Are you more strict for school than you are for like free time, or do your behavior standards change?

- Respondent VIII:** No, it's pretty much the same.
- Interviewer:** The same?
- Respondent VIII:** It's consistent. What we expect of him, how he acts during when he's doing his school is how we would expect him to be at the dinner table, or you know, when we're out or when he's with someone else.
- Interviewer:** Across the board?
- Respondent VIII:** Pretty much across the board. I do require him to sit still more maybe; he can be a little more antsy if he is just doing some coloring or some craft project. But I do want him to be sitting more still if he's doing his schoolwork. That would be the only difference that I'd probably be more strict with. Otherwise, it's pretty consistent.
- Interviewer:** How are expectations set and do you utilize any incentives or grades or rewards?
- Respondent VIII:** Everything is graded as far as tests, quizzes, and projects. The daily work is not graded, it's just, if he got it wrong, we work on what didn't understand about it.
- Interviewer:** You give it back to him?
- Respondent VIII:** Right away. I mark them right after he's done that particular project and as far as rewards, other than test grades –
- Interviewer:** How do you maintain interest in self-initiation for the student?
- Respondent VIII:** It depends on the subject. If it's something that he likes more, we certainly will let him look into it further, especially with history or reading that he's doing with science or even with the math. He was really interested in Roman Numerals, so that day was just a really exciting day. We talked more about roman numerals and we let him talk about it.
- Interviewer:** Do you discuss Roman history?
- Respondent VIII:** We did talk a little about why they came up with it. We didn't – we probably could have even gone further, and he would have been really interested, now that you bring that up. But we just talked a little bit about the history and our experience with roman

numerals, what we used them for, what we remember about them, just kind of a conversation probably more about them. For history, rather than having him read independently, he'll either read it to me, or I'll read it to him and then we can discuss it. I find it interesting. I find that I learn a lot about history and that keeps him interested because it's something we can dialogue about.

Interviewer: How do you know when a lesson is learned and what determines your decision to move ahead?

Respondent VIII: Well if I find that he just has no idea of how to answer the question, or if I haven't found that he hasn't picked up anything easily. It comes pretty easy for him, but if in like Math, if there is something that's very difficult or taking a long time, then I will give him an extra day to really work on that and understand.

Interviewer: Do you go over it again?

Respondent VIII: Yes, I go over it again. Normally though, the lessons do and this is pretty much across the board. The next lesson that you go to, the worksheet that they have, they have a little review at the top. So in math, you're always reviewing

Interviewer: Re-checking information?

Respondent VIII: Yeah, so there's always a review, and then the curriculum also provides for a time to review, like math drills at the beginning of each lesson. So I think that keeps him up with it too. So if I found, you know, that he just did not do well on the test, then I make sure I go over it with him as I said before.

Interviewer: What assessment models are used in terms of monitoring progress? Do you make your own up?

Respondent VIII: For history, my husband will make up either oral quizzes or tests, but the rest is what comes with the curriculum.

Interviewer: It's already done? Prepared for you?

Respondent VIII: Yeah, and I have --- it comes with a progress report sheet that I write all the grades on, just so I can keep a running track.

Interviewer: He gets a report card?

Respondent VIII: Well, I guess he does because at the end there are three marking periods and at the end of each marking period, he gets a

cumulative grade, so that will be the report card. I haven't gotten to the first marking period yet.

Interviewer: Have you had any training as an educator or do you seek resource support for your instruction?

Respondent VIII: Well, I do have other friends who home school, who have been very helpful to me. But I guess working in the public school makes a big difference for me. It does help with knowing what is expected of the children there and my background of education helps as well.

Interviewer: Do you go to conventions or anything, besides the one?

Respondent VIII: This is our first year home schooling, and this is a trial year. We'll reassess at the end of the year if it's really been beneficial for him.

Interviewer: If it's more work or less work than sending kids to public school?

Respondent VIII: It's more work.

Interviewer: You feel as if it is more work?

Respondent VIII: I'm learning a lot. I am learning an awful lot. I'm enjoying the time with him. I do see how teachers can be frustrated sometimes because of his daydreaming, but we have certainly enjoyed home schooling. I know my husband has really enjoyed it. It has been really good for him.

Interviewer: Fun?

Respondent VIII: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you feel you get closer to your child when you home school?

Respondent VIII: I certainly do. I really do. I think because as I said, the school day dominated our time and I was always on him. I felt like it was a negative time when he was home from school because he had to do work and get back to it, and now I structure the day. I have control. I guess that's what it comes down to. I like the control.

Interviewer: Do you have any training?

Respondent VIII: No, I am an occupational therapist and have been working in schools for a long time now.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Summary

Chapter four reports the results of the study. Qualitative data was collected by audiotaping and is reported in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4. Qualitative data collected during the interviews was reported verbatim through transcribed responses that were anchored to the study's research questions. The four investigative areas of Curriculum, Teaching Decisions, Teaching Methods, and Learning Environment/Climate were addressed in the interview questions.

Table 1

Analysis of Participant Responses with regards to Curriculum Adoption and Usage

Participant	Response regarding Curriculum Adoption and Usage
Respondent I	Purchased and utilizes pre-planned curriculum.
Respondent II	None. Respondent did not adopt a pre-planned curriculum.
Respondent III	Purchased and utilizes pre-planned curriculum from Mother Seton.
Respondent IV	Purchased and utilizes pre-planned curriculum from Abecca, in addition to utilizing own curriculum design.
Respondent V	Purchased and utilizes pre-planned curriculum from Abecca.
Respondent VI	Purchased and utilizes pre-planned curriculum from Abecca.
Respondent VII	Uses some pre-planned curriculum; however, respondent also utilizes other resources.
Respondent VIII	Uses some pre-planned curriculum; however, respondent has chosen some content from other sources such as the library etc.

Table 2

Analysis of Participant Responses with regards to Teaching Decisions and Choices

Participant	Response regarding Teaching Decisions and Choices
Respondent I	Teaching decisions are predetermined by purchased curriculum.
Respondent II	Teaching decisions are made according to student interest.
Respondent III	Teaching decisions are predetermined by purchased curriculum.
Respondent IV	Teaching decisions are predetermined by purchased curriculum in addition to personal curriculum.
Respondent V	Teaching decisions are primarily based on purchased curriculum, with some variation.
Respondent VI	Teaching decisions are primarily based on purchased curriculum, with variations according to personal needs of the child.
Respondent VII	Teaching decisions are based on content completed by public school peers as well as curriculum designed by parents.
Respondent VIII	Teaching decisions are based on individual instruction and computer use.

Table 3

Analysis of Participant Responses with regards to Teaching Methodology

Participant	Response regarding Teaching Methodology
Respondent I	Teaching methodology consists of prescribed and individual interactions.
Respondent II	Teaching methodology is described as eclectic.
Respondent III	Teaching methodology consists of tutorial, individual interactions, and group work with home school network.
Respondent IV	Teaching methodology consists of tutorial and individual interactions.
Respondent V	Teaching methodology consists of individual interactions and group work with home school network for trips and socialization.
Respondent VI	Teaching methodology consists of individual interactions and group work with home school network for trips and socialization.
Respondent VII	Teaching methodology consists of individual interactions and group work with home school network for trips and socialization.
Respondent VIII	Teaching methodology consists of individual interactions, direct instruction, projects, and discussion.

Table 4

Analysis of Participant Responses with regards to Learning Environment and Climate

Participant	Response regarding Learning Environment and Climate
Respondent I	Learning environment is structured and based in the home.
Respondent II	Learning environment is unstructured and is based both inside and outside of the home.
Respondent III	Learning environment is structured and based in the home. Field trips are used for supplemental activity.
Respondent IV	Learning environment is structured and based in the home.
Respondent V	Learning environment is structured and based in the home. Group instruction in home schooling network is used for higher content areas.
Respondent VI	Learning environment is structured and based in the home. Supplemental field trips are utilized for socialization and reinforcement.
Respondent VII	Learning environment is structured and based in the home. Supplemental field trips are utilized for socialization and reinforcement.
Respondent VIII	Learning environment is based in the home and is structured by day and time.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the actual educational methods and instructional constructs that form the basis of home school instruction, while ascertaining the educational climate in that environment. The four areas of investigation attempted to provide a more detailed description of this educational practice and climate in New Jersey in the frames of effective school categories of curriculum, teaching decisions, methods, and environment.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter I describes the historical data and background information regarding home schooling. The purpose of the study along with its significance is outlined. Terms, definitions, and de-limitations are included as well. Chapter II is an extensive literature review forming the basis for the guiding question and the four investigative areas. Chapter III consists of the research design and methodology. Data analysis and collection were also discussed along with the subjects of the study. Chapter IV is a compilation of the data in the form of transcribed participant responses. Chapter V is a compilation of chapter summaries, study conclusions, as well as recommendations for future research. These are the implications of the study in regards to the four investigative areas.

Data and Conclusions

This study was structured to provide a more detailed description of home schooling and the environment according to the practices of effective schools. The four investigative areas were described in the aforementioned chapters interrelated with fourteen open-ended questions. The following data summarizes the responses to the respective interview data to the questions. The following interpretations were ascertained.

Subsidiary Question 1: Curriculum Adoption and Use

The results of the data suggest that most home schoolers purchase a curriculum that is obtained through resources or manufacturers/vendors dedicated to the home school market. Six of the eight participants purchased materials. They were able to attend conferences and workshops that allow them to peruse the materials. Unschoolers do not believe in "schooling" and follow closely the educational beliefs and strategies of John Holt (1997a, b).

Content was acquired through many resources including the public library and collaborative groups, who collect material to share and utilize. These collaboratives set up conferences for their groups to preview other curriculum, and affiliations with other organizations for home schooling provide the same.

Curriculum planning, in terms of technology and futuristic approaches, seemed to be minimized. The data suggests very early that even unschoolers did not use the wide amounts of technology available to the instructor. Some computerized courses were used

across both groups. However, the limited knowledge base and information of the instructor about technology availability and usages, prohibited all of the instructors from using it more-in-depth. A common response in all of the home schoolers was that they would like to use technology more avidly; however, they neither had the time or the resources to explore the utilization of technologies and their applications.

Subsidiary Question 2: Teaching Decisions

According to the analysis of data, it is apparent that there are two thematic approaches and philosophies regarding home schooling. There seem to be unschoolers, whose philosophy closely represents John Dewey's model (1944), while other home schoolers, who are influenced by geographic areas and fit a more traditional, structured school model. The results of data analysis indicate that the unschoolers did not have a pre-planned curriculum; did not seem to have concerns about not having a structured curriculum; and allowed the interests and initiatives of the students to guide them in content decisions. The unschoolers felt that the individual was paramount, and the value in the education process was from the interest and motivation spurred by the increased motivation about the excitement of learning. This seemed to drive a tangential learning approach, in which the student and the instructor are involved in a process, rather than a curriculum, which drives a path of instruction in one direction.

The other group seemed to fit into a more structured paradigm of schooling. These home schoolers were not necessarily philosophically against school, but had chosen to do schooling in the home for socialization and moral reasons. This group did not appear to have deep philosophical contradictions with the values of traditional

schools; however the convenience and the control over what was to be instructed was the driving force. In this group, there seemed to be novices who did not feel comfortable with making managerial decisions about instructional content. Nor, did they appear confident about making decisions on content and when to learn a differentiated topic. These home schoolers purchase curricula that were commonly used amongst home schoolers and modified them in variation according to their own needs.

In terms of managing instruction and organizing the day, the data suggest that the two philosophies divided the group into two subset groups, who organized their day according to philosophy. The unschoolers, whose belief system does not include a structured environment for learning, appeared to have unstructured days, utilized learning experience in ordinary events, and did not appear to be concerned about traditional content area. Unschoolers, however, check with regular traditional school curriculum to assure themselves that nothing was being missed. This seemed to be rather a guiding technique rather than a modeling technique in applying curriculum. All of the home schoolers surveyed using the unschooler technique, seemed more concerned about college rather than high school standards in aligning their own methodology.

The other group organized their day in quite a structured fashion. The day had breakdowns in terms of content areas. This model replicated public school in many instances. The organized fashion was closely regulated by the pre-planned and paid curriculum that was purchased. Instructional organization was decided for this group by the manufacturer.

In making educational decisions, which was the next subcategory, most decisions were made for those who purchased curriculum by the standardized information provided

to them. In most cases, it was a prescriptive, diagnostic teaching approach, whereby instructions were provided at a set grade level and were not strayed from. These lessons provided reinforcement, evaluation tools, and even report cards, therefore, the educational decisions about what and when to teach a determined content area were prescribed. Unschoolers determined their learning based on curiosity and interest level of the students. From the data, it suggests that educational decisions were not actually made, but learning instances were provided tangentially, as the student approached a learning task and got more in-depth from what was being learned. From that point, other interests, curiosities and activities seem to evolve that both the instructor and students became active participants in attacking.

Teaching decisions in five of the eight cases were already determined by the scope and sequence of the purchased materials. Although the time and depth of each subject was managed by the parent in all but one case. In this case the parent directly adhered to the purchased curriculum. Teaching choices and decisions centered primarily around the motivation and interest of the child and their eagerness to continue. All interviewed participants discussed their strategy of allowing the child to gauge their own involvement in the subject matter in terms of depth and involvement, and in the process of learning, in terms of routines and time lines.

Subsidiary Question 3: Teaching Methodology

In terms of the instruction that was employed, in all cases, it was apparent that either direct tutorial instruction or individual work activities was a mode of instruction for the students. In the home schoolers, who engaged in collaborative networks for either

field trips or more challenging content, supplemental material was presented in small groups. In the case of networks, which were geographically close, it was apparent that small schools actually emerged from these collaboratives. The small schools in this instance, developed content together, the teachers did team teaching approaches, the children learned collaboratively, and this seemed to replicate small, private schools rather than home schooling approaches. In this instance, the examiner felt that this was a convenient way to replicate the traditional school model, as well as a convenient way to circumvent public traditional values immersed in curriculum or expectations.

Teaching methodology in all participants was individual. Six of the eight respondents were traditional in their method and related that they utilized the type of instruction that they were familiar with from their own education. Those participants who chose to unschool were more tangential and creative in their approach, and the methodology varied with the exploratory nature of the child.

The home school parents all varied the schedule to their own and their child's biological clock. The techniques that were used were driven by the content or area of interest, but individual instruction, one to one was the most widely used approach. Parents did not rely upon textbooks if they did not buy a purchased curriculum, and the topic choice was given to the child and was geared towards their initiation and motivation. When students become satiated or disinterested in a subject, each of the participants suspended instruction in that area. Oftentimes, tangential topics were explored and studied to optimize interest and motivation. In many cases the parent instructed for a period of time and then individual projects or works were assigned.

Computer usage was a support material and not primarily used as an instructional methodology in any of the cases. Five of the eight participants felt uncomfortable with the use of the Internet for several reasons. In many cases, parents expressed an interest in acquiring training in the use of the computer for instruction and several home instructors are planning to use on-line courses for the more challenging content as their children get older.

Assessments were provided in most cases by the vendor of the purchased material. However, parents usually gauged learning by the "feeling" that the lesson was learned and from direct feedback from the child. Some home schoolers take the opportunity to have their child tested by other sources in the public domain, and many of these evaluation tools are standardized.

In terms of lessons learned and decision making in terms of progress, this was usually curriculum driven and the data suggested that all of the home schoolers reinforced lessons until the student appeared to have learned what was within the content area. However, those home schoolers who seemed to be novices, strictly adhere to the curricular decisions about when to move ahead. It was apparent in the data that home schooling instructors who are more experienced, varied from this by other indicators that seemed to determine when the decision to move ahead was made. Therefore, the experience in instruction provided the instructor with more leeway and knowledge about learning styles and learning influences in assisting their decision-making ability in terms of content.

Assessment models that were used in terms of monitoring progress were mostly prescribed by purchased curriculum or tests. In many instances, the data was sent off to

either the curriculum company who distributed the curriculum or to Bob Jones University for test data, such as SAT's. Individual responses were the primary means of checking and rechecking learning, and the parents then decided to monitor progress verbally, and in many instances with purchased curriculum, reports, charts, or report cards were available to them.

Subsidiary Question 4: Learning Environment/Climate

How do you provide learning opportunities? In the case of the unschoolers, learning opportunities were seen in every situation; in the home, in daily living skills, in the community, and in exploration techniques. The home schoolers who had prescribed curriculums also provided learning opportunities in alternate ways within the home; however, they were utilized as reinforcement and supplemental techniques rather than the primary mode of instruction as it is with people whose philosophy are more in the unschooler mode.

Under the subcategory of environment and reinforcement, home schoolers seem to vary very little. The home schooler who purchases curriculum get graded reports, tests, and actual report cards, which they utilize as reinforcement for their own children. Most other parents use verbal praise and very little concrete rewards in terms of reinforcing instructional concepts that are accomplished. The environment of a parent with a child seemed to impose an embedded structure, in which reinforcement was less necessary than when a teacher, who was not in the family structure, needed to reinforce behaviors. Therefore, it appears that behavior is implicit and unspoken within the parental authority, and that rewards were less necessary to motivate and have students

take the initiative. However, in much of the data, parents reported that students actually did ask for stickers or grades, and when probed further, the response was indicating that the students were asking for these reinforcements, reports, and grades due to societal peer pressure. This was reported as questioning of peers in the community and their school performance. When asked why they wanted the grades, the answer was provided in most cases, that the grades were not for the students themselves, but as a means of allaying any peer pressure in the community about their performance, since home schooling is regarded as a less favorable approach to learning.

In keeping with the environment, the student-teacher interactions were generally in the home. Separate spots, rooms, or areas were designated for instruction and the student knew when to go to these areas. The environment seemed to be more flexible in many instances, however, the activities were so structured that the flexibility of the environment came from the students themselves and the parents when there seemed to be a needed break. The flexibility about the place where instruction took place was very minimal since the parent decided where an environment of little distraction would be advantageous to both student and instructor.

In terms of behavior standards for school activities, which is the climate in the home school environment, it seemed that there were not changes in most cases for any of the home schoolers. As reported previously, the structure is adherent to the schedule unless the child was unschooled and then there was actually no schedule. But the implicit structure inherent in the actual interaction between parent and child, demonstrated little change for behavior standards for actual school activities.

How the expectations are set and utilization of rewards was determined primarily upon whether the curriculum was purchased and prescribed, or whether the unschoolers were able to set expectations individually. Therefore, this seemed to separate the group again by philosophies since the expectations were either set by an outside source or internally in terms of the unschoolers within the environment and with the instructor and student. However, in each instance, it was apparent that the data suggested that all parents had high expectations in terms of learning for their students. They seemed to feel that the standards could not be lessened because of common perceptions and criticism of home schooling. This seemed to drive the instructor to a higher level of academic proficiency and was apparent in their verbalizations about how and what they wanted their students to learn. In the discussion, it was very apparent that a broad amount of content and high expectations for the depth of learning was evident in the data.

Maintaining interest and self-initiation for the student was varied according to individual interests. Each of the home schoolers across the data suggested that the interests and self-initiation was either determined by the curriculum or by the student themselves. When parents felt that there was a more flexible schedule necessary, then they did break and allow for more flexibility in terms of time or snacks or a withdraw from the task of academia. However, they did vary the amount of self-initiation. The ability to start the task was flexible; however, there was not much room with prescribed curriculum in terms of moving away from the actual curriculum purchased. In other instances, the self-initiation drove the process for the student, and the student maintained interest according to the depths of the interest level for the task.

Expected goals and outcomes for instruction seem to be divided amongst the two subgroups. The purchased curriculum and goals provided little educational choice or freedom to decide outcomes. Novices who did home schooling liked the choices made for them, especially at the high school level. The more experienced home schoolers indicated that they liked to vary this purchased curriculum, and as the ease and comfort with making decisions about content and outcomes increased, then they varied more from the purchased curriculum and had different expectations. Therefore, it appears that as home schoolers accumulate years of experience as instructors, the expected goals and outcomes for instruction seem to replicate more individual needs rather than the needs from the prescribed curriculum that was purchased.

The environment in the home schools is generally structured and the day is organized by the parent and is generally accomplished in this area. The school activities in all cases were separate for the daily living activities. None of the interviewed parents used daily activities as content for their lesson. The traditional home schoolers utilized a "classroom" environment or area, and in some cases a room was set aside for instruction. The dining room table was a common area for instruction.

The day was structured by the interest in the topic in all cases. Breaks were for eating and rest, but none of the parents allowed a commingling of activities. School activities were scheduled for a period during the day. Some of the parents instructed during the evening hours due to other commitments, but again this was partial instruction for the bulk was done during the day. It was apparent that the parents were aware of the criticism regarding home schooling and did not want to incur any difficulties in continuing the home schooling which may arise from the authorities or family critics. To

this end, parents employed reporting vehicles for assessment so that their child would not have to deal with peer pressure about their school activities and choices.

Behavior standards did not change but all the parents interviewed felt that the tone of the interaction changed with the instructional time. None of the parents utilized rewards or positive reinforcers other than verbal praise. In only one instance did the child ask for a reporting system so that when asked by outsiders, it could be provided. The parents felt that in all of the eight cases that rewards were not necessary. The small children did receive a small sticker occasionally.

In terms of a structured routine and time line, again the philosophical based constructs developed this practice. In the unschoolers, there was no routine or time line in terms of either the day or scope and sequence. In other group, constructs remained tight in terms of time, routines, places of instruction, amount of time provided for lessons, reinforcement lessons, and assessment techniques. Again, the basic model under which the parent chose home schooling seemed to drive the system. The effective utilization of learning times did not appear to be a problem for either of the subdivided groups. Each group seemed that they were task oriented and most studying tasks were started early, and each of the motivations for the groups were assigned to this is time for learning,' and 'these are the things we're going to be involved with.' Even with the unschoolers, the tasks that were approached were under the guise of learning. They were described as learning tasks and were completed under the guise of instruction. This seems more of a manifestation of the intent of the instructor rather than of the process of time management.

Reasons for Home Schooling

For all of the home school families sampled, the reasons for choosing home schooling seemed to be coached under moral reasons. Such as socialization worries concerning negative peer influence and more content control over topics learned. In each of the samples the instructor was the mother, and what was learned and how it fits in with the family values was paramount to them. Much discussion was provided about how public and traditional schools have curricula that were either not in alignment with family values, or were in alignment with public ideology that was not in keeping with their family's morals and value set. So overall, socialization worries were not as much as a concern as was negative peer influence, and the influence of values embedded in curriculum in the traditional school setting.

Training and Resources

In most instances, the parents did not have any educational training. Furthermore, in most instances, the mothers were the instructors and felt that they had an intuitive sense about interests and needs which provided a skeletal frame in which they varied instruction. The parents felt that they had a key insight to both the interests, motivation levels, and biological clocks of their own children. This insight, they believed, provides an overall picture of how well the student would do in the instructional process. In the day to day routine, the parents seem to be able to flex the schedule according to the daily routine and content learned. Many home schoolers supplemented the day in the afternoon with experiences in the community that would support learning in supplemental areas and reinforcement. All of the data suggested that extracurricular

activities, either in a network or field trip mode, were utilized as learning opportunities to support curriculum decisions. The training and the collaboratives or networks appeared to be more in alignment with traditional models. In the data, it was suggested by many home schoolers that they do attend conferences to gain access to materials, resources, and through grass root efforts. Therefore, the conclusion is that in summary, although there is no training or resources, that these parents or instructors were very resourceful in gaining access to both content and resources available in order to aspire to their own expectations for a higher standard of education for their own students.

Summary

The experience of home schooling appears to be a decision that is individual in its inception and delivery. Parents appeared to be concerned with having a modicum of control over the content and philosophy given to their child. In many cases, a purchased curriculum provided a structure for the parents and a feeling of comfort was derived from having educational decisions made by an outside source. However, there was a great deal of flexibility in the implementation of these curricula. These decisions were made primarily based upon the individual need and desires of the students. In this manner, home schooling is highly individualized and geared to the individual learning styles, and intellectual capacity of the individual. One to one individual instruction was used when students were with their parents but group instruction and activities were provided by collaborative meetings in which each parent felt socialization needs were satisfied.

Parents felt an intuitive sense when a subject was mastered and relied upon the interest level of the student to determine their movement within the curriculum.

Assessment was used only when the parent wished to measure the success of their child in comparison to other students or when it was part of the purchased curriculum.

The climate in the settings was structured, but flexible and relaxed and the student set the tone for completion of the activity. Most parents reported that if the child was no longer interested that they would move ahead in the curriculum. The settings were mostly in a quiet section of home which was designated for instruction unless activities required other environments. Behavior standards were not relaxed and parents reported that school activities set the tone for the day and needed to be completed prior to any other activity.

Home schooling seems to have adopted a quality of individualized instruction with many resources and activities to choose from. In many cases, public agencies and private businesses are catering to home school population in terms of provision of services and discounts.

Recommendations for Future Research

Home schooling is a recent practice and the void in the literature regarding this practice is limited. Accordingly, the researcher offers the following recommendations for future research:

1. It is recommended that an exploratory study be done on the attitudes of home schooled children and their perception regarding their traditional schooled peers.
2. It is recommended that an examination be done on the impact of home schooling on family relationships.

3. It is recommended that secondary educational options and admission criteria be investigated to determine how they may have been impacted upon by home schooling.
4. It is recommended that home school resources be researched and their effect upon curricular decisions.
5. It is recommended that a study examine the perceptions of public school personnel to home schooling.
6. It is recommended that a study investigate the emotional implications of home schooling students.
7. It is recommended that a study investigate the personality types of people who chose to home school.

With more research, we may be able to understand the complexity and impact of home schooling upon our children and our future.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions Utilized in Study

Interview Questions Utilized in Study

Please note that the following questions have been divided into various subject categories.

Category: Curricular Questions

- 1) Do you use a pre-planned curriculum? If so, where did you obtain it?

Category: Teaching Choices

- 2) How do you manage instruction and organize the 'school day'?
- 3) Do you have a structured routine or time line?
- 4) How do you assure effective utilization of the learning time?
- 5) How do you make educational decisions about what and when to teach a determined content area?
- 6) In your curriculum planning do you employ teaching?

Category: Methods

- 7) What type of instruction do you employ? Tutorial, direct, or computerized?
- 8) Do you have expected goals or outcomes for instruction?
- 9) How do you provide learning opportunities?
- 10) How is feedback and reinforcement for instructional concepts accomplished?

Category: Environment

- 11) Why did you choose home school?
- 12) What is the environment during teacher-student interactions?

Category: Environment -- Continued

- 13) Is there a difference in your behavior standards for school activities?
- 14) How are expectations set and do you utilize any incentives and/or rewards?
- 15) How do you maintain interest and self-initiation for the student?
- 16) How do you know when a lesson is "learned" and what determines your decision to move ahead?
- 17) What assessment models are used in terms of monitoring progress?
- 18) Have you had any training or do you seek resource support for your instruction?

Appendix B

Participant Informed Consent Letter

**Home School Interview Informed Consent Form
(Focus/Interview)**

I understand that with my participation in this interview that I am voluntarily participating in research conducted by Angela M. Davenport, a Doctoral Student at Seton Hall University in the College of Education. I understand that refusal to participate will not involve any penalty of loss of benefits to which I am entitled. I may discontinue participation at any time, by notifying Ms. Davenport at any time, without penalty as well. Questions or comments can also be addressed to Ms. Davenport at 511 Fourth Street, Ocean City, NJ 08226-3911. Phone: 609-399-9083.

The purpose of the research is to gather data to obtain a description of the essence and practices associated with Home Schooling. Information will be gathered by means of interviews which are strictly confidential. I understand that the information obtained from this interview will be analyzed as a group and no singular results will be presented or published and my identity will remain anonymous. The confidentiality of the data will be kept by coding of the interview data. Master lists, data, and transcripts will be accessible only to the researcher and will be destroyed after the study.

The interview content is formulated from questions that deal with educational practice and in no way deals with individual subjects or their rights.

I realize that this interview will take approximately thirty minutes to an hour to complete. I have given permission for my responses to be audiotaped which will be destroyed after the final report.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone of the office is 973-275-2974.

I have read the material above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Subject or Authorized Representative

Date

Appendix C
Introduction Letter

511 Fourth Street
Ocean City, New Jersey 08226-3911

May --, 2000.

Dear Sir/Madame,

As a doctoral student in the Executive Ed.D program in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, I am conducting research on Home Schooling practices in New Jersey. The purpose of this research is to find how Home Schooling is practiced in terms of instructional methods. Your name was selected randomly by using a random table of numbers from a member list. I am requesting your help as a volunteer to be interviewed and participate in this study in these ways:

- The purpose of the interview is to gather data about the educational approach and the environment of home schooling.
- You will be asked the enclosed interview questions that were designed to identify the instructional aspects of your instruction. A free flowing discussion will take place regarding these questions.
- You will be asked the questions which will provide an overview of the practice.
- With your permission, I am requesting that the responses be audio taped for free flow of information and less distractions by writing.

As a participant you are protected in terms of anonymity and confidentiality in many ways:

- All data will be coded with a random number of pseudonyms.
- All data will be kept by the researcher alone in locked files and master list will be kept locked separately in a different location.
- The data will be transcribed by a hired transcriber that has no affiliation with the researcher, and all identifiers will be excluded from the written transcripts.
- The transcripts and audio taped interviews will be available for review.
- All transcripts and tapes will be destroyed after the study.

I know that you are busy; however, it will take only a short time to answer the simple interview questions. The entire interview will be approximately an hour. All answers are confidential and will be used only in a combination with those of other home schooled families.

If you are interested in receiving a report on the findings of the research, feel free to provide me with your name and address, or if you prefer, request the results in a separate letter. I will be glad to send you a complimentary report when ready. If you still have questions about the study and/or the procedure, please contact me at:

Angela M. Davenport
511 Fourth Street
Ocean City, New Jersey 08226-3911
(609) 399-9083

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone of the office is 973-275-2974.

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Angela M. Davenport